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PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN KINDERGARTEN AND SECOND GRADE
LITERACY INSTRUCTION: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO
STUDENT-AUTHORED TRAVELING BOOKS

by

Dorothy C. Little

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences

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2010

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ABSTRACT

Parents as Partners in Kindergarten and Second Grade Literacy Instruction: A
Qualitative Inquiry into Student-Authored Traveling Books

by

Dorothy C. Little, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2010

Major Professor: Dr. J. Nicholls Eastmond
Department: Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences

The purpose of this research was to study a sociocognitive “student/parent/peer authoring community” called Traveling Books (TBks) in kindergarten and second grade in a public elementary school setting. TBks are teacher-made vehicles for involving parents in peer-based literacy environments. The study was based on Epstein’s theory that increasing overlap of students’ spheres of influence, home, school, and community, creates a greater likelihood that children will learn what the parents want them to learn. The aim was to locate essential elements that triggered learning processes to occur and to discover research-based fundamentals still missing from TBks.

This qualitative inquiry incorporated the framework of Dr. Elliot Eisner’s Educational Criticism with five distinctive dimensions (intentional, structural, curricular, pedagogical, and evaluative) to guide the analysis of TBk procedures. A purposive sample of six Utah teachers from rural and inner city classrooms participated with 251

students in 12 groups for 2½ years. Data were gathered from interviews, classroom observations, surveys, and artifacts. My role was researcher and participant/observer.

What I found was that motivation for authoring increased when parents (or parent figures) contributed simple family knowledge to the TBks. Most parents indicated that their child's "favorite" TBks were those that had required the most parent involvement. A few parents, however, described frustration with their role in facilitating TBks with their child. Seven vignettes described the complex and subtle qualities found in TBk sociocognitive environments and its effect on struggling, average, gifted, and behaviorally handicapped children, and longitudinal effects on former students. Despite increased commitments, most teachers reported a lighter workload overall using TBks to augment their existing literacy programs.

A sense of urgency to proceed with internet development for TBk facilitation was expressed. Options were explored for developing internet-assisted training for teachers and parents. Twelve essential elements were identified and a TBks instructional model was developed. A clearer understanding of the educational philosophy behind TBks resulted in the design of a prototype tool to engage parents in TBks through interactive home writing. This study raised important questions about characteristics of optimal support for facilitating TBks and about fundamentals still missing for broader implementation.

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Dorothy C. Little

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The new technology per se is not a revolution—the revolution is the difference that technology makes in how we organize, structure, and empower our lives.

(Gregorian, Hawkins & Taylor, 1992, p. 7)

Research suggests that parent involvement with children's school experiences contributes significantly to student achievement and other positive outcomes (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Epstein, 1995; Shockley, Michalove, & Allen, 1995; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001, p. 29). Accordingly, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2006) renewed a directive that schools find ways to engage parents in students' school experiences. One of the most important findings of both early and recent parent involvement research is that the parents of disadvantaged and minority children can and do make a positive contribution to their children's achievement in school if they, the parents, receive guidance and encouragement in the types of parent involvement that can make a difference (Trumbull et al., 2001). For numerous reasons, however, minority or low-income parents are often underrepresented among the ranks of parents involved with the schools (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989).

Elementary kindergarten and second grade teachers are well positioned to engage parents in children's literacy instruction (Keyser, 2006). However, research is needed to guide the development of quality communications between home and school so that teachers who are willing to involve every parent can do so more equitably, effectively, and systematically. The research described herein explores the nature of interactivity in a

student/parent/peer authoring community called a Traveling Book (TBk) project. A single TBk can be described as a compilation of classmates' writings, each page authored by a different student. Most TBks were authored in class but two or three were authored by students and parents at home. Each TBk was circulated to the homes of students for shared reading experiences (SREs) with parents. One or two new TBks were added each month to those in circulation. At the end of the year, the TBks were taken apart and each child's work was compiled into a separate book for the child to keep.

Findings in Chapter IV describe details and samples of TBk facilitations. Appendix F contains sample lessons which some of the second grade teachers used. An aim of this research is to establish guidelines for developing future computer-based mechanisms to aid parent involvement in TBks. The qualities of complex and subtle events within the community will be explored in order to better understand what goes on in the project.

The Problem

The basic problem addressed in this study is the lack of literacy skills in children and families. Assuming that parents and teachers as partners are responsible for children's learning to read, increased understanding is needed on how teachers may serve parents in their involvement at home with children's school literacy instruction. What is implied is a partnership between teachers and parents, with parents shouldering more of the responsibility for their child's learning than is generally acknowledged in extant educational literature. In order to define this partnership the roles of teachers and parents

need to be defined. What is the teacher's role in encouraging this kind of partnership? Specifically what is the parents' role and what kind of commitment is involved? How can computer-based technologies facilitate PI in the partnership? These and other questions arise from the sub-problem of how teachers can achieve and manage: (a) *equitable* PI, leading to (b) *effective* PI, and (c) *systematic* PI through establishing predictable routines that teachers and parents agree with, trust, and are willing to support (Epstein, 1995).

A student's repertoire of cultural and family experiences, values, and identity are the basic elements a child uses to establish a place among peers (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001). Indeed, formal learning at school necessarily builds on the informal learning at home. In the framework proposed by this study the school's role in teaching the child remains secondary to the parents' role (Trumbull et al., 2001). Accordingly, schools and teachers have potential to serve every family as educational professionals for learning, but ought not to be seen as the persons primarily responsible for it. Although federal initiatives such as NCLB have recognized the benefits of parent partnering and have attempted to promote PI in schooling, federal initiatives historically have placed responsibility for a child's literacy learning almost exclusively on teachers, not parents, a condition this study works to remedy. Thus, the problem addressed by this study is a lack of literacy skills. The solution proposed is a reorientation of the roles of parents, teachers, and students into a more active three-way partnership to facilitate student literacy in the child's early elementary years.

Background of Parent Partnering Research

As a preliminary statement before reviewing existing research, it is worth reminding the reader that the orientation of much of this research, as reflected in the terminology used does not match the strong parental role expectation espoused in this study. For example, the concept of “harnessing parental influence” assumes that the teacher or school administrators are doing the harnessing and thus controlling parental action. Despite this limitation of not viewing parent-teacher interaction as a true partnership, a review of existing research can provide valuable conclusions, if this limitation is kept in mind.

In 1989, K. Cotton and Wikelund reviewed and synthesized 41 research studies regarding PI with schools for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. This report stated, “The research overwhelmingly demonstrated that parent involvement in children’s learning is positively related to achievement, as well as to affective outcomes such as attitude toward school, self-concept, classroom behavior, time spent on homework, and motivation.” The Cotton and Wikelund report found all types of parent involvement to be beneficial, but the most effective forms were those that engaged parents in working directly with their children on learning activities in the home. This report revealed also that the earlier the home and family influence could be “harnessed,” the greater the likelihood of higher student achievement (p. 3).

Theoretical Underpinnings

Increasing the Overlap of Children's Spheres: A Core Value

Epstein (1995) described a core value for TBks; that of increasing overlap among the spheres of influence in the lives of children: home, school, and community. These spheres are shown graphically in Figure 1-1. Epstein's theory explains how social organizations connect, and provides a growing literature on the positive and negative results of these connections for students, families, and schools. On one hand, some teachers and schools might separate the three spheres of influence that directly affect student learning and development, conducting minimal communications and interactions with families and communities, or teachers might seek to engage only those parents that volunteer and seem easy to work with. Conversely, TBks provide a mechanism or tool to engage "a parent for every child" in the TBk aspect of the school's peer-based literacy instruction. Epstein explained,

With frequent [high quality] interactions between schools, families, and communities, more students are more likely to receive common messages from various people about the importance of school, of working hard, of thinking creatively, of helping one another, and of staying in school. (1995)

The first part of Figure 1-1 depicts only minimal overlap of the spheres of influence in which home and school carry on their separate roles and have little to do with each other. However, the second part depicts increased overlap, including an area of triple overlap in the center where home, school, and community interact. TBks were the vehicle used in this study to create increased overlap of all spheres. Epstein positions the

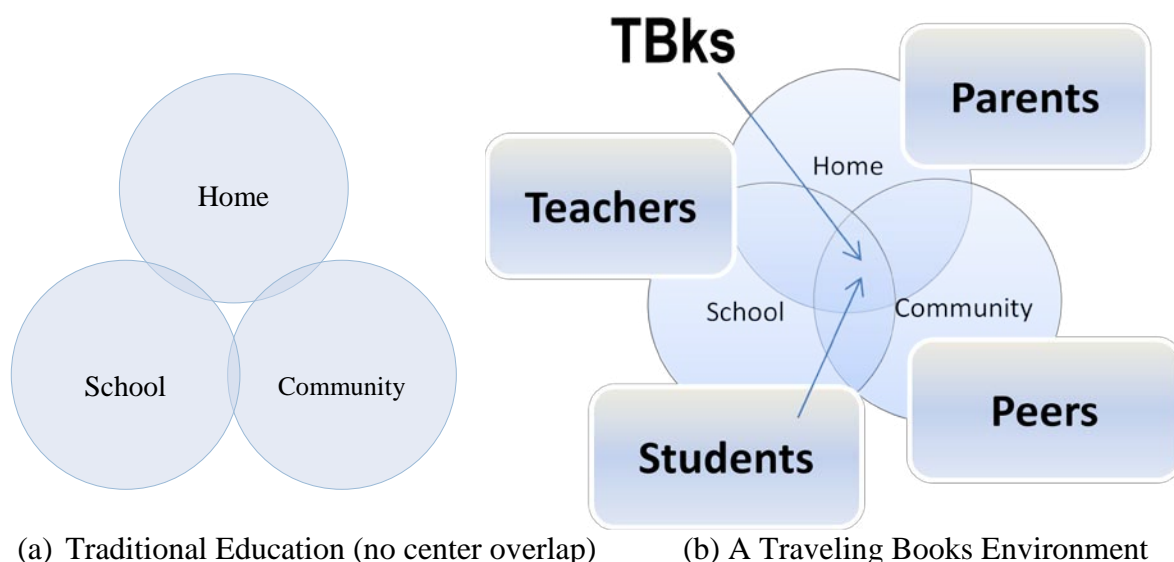


Figure 1-1. Model depicting “traditional education” versus a Traveling Books environment (adapted from Epstein, 1995).

child at the center in the area of triple overlap (1995). TBks are the vehicle used in this study to increase overlap. Note, triple overlap also increases the areas of double overlap.

Epstein’s Six Types of Parental Involvement

Epstein (1995) established a second framework for defining six major types of parent involvement, as follows: (type 1) parenting, (type 2) communicating and designing effective communications, (type 3) volunteering, (type 4) learning at home, (type 5) decision making, and (type 6) collaborating with community. Epstein’s theory and framework resulted from many studies and from years of work by educators and families to develop more comprehensive programs for school and family partnerships, and to help researchers locate their questions and results in ways that inform and improve practice (Epstein, 1995).

This study focuses particularly on type 2 parent involvement, communicating, and on type 4 parent involvement, learning at home. Each type of parent involvement, including types 2 and 4, can be fostered in myriad ways by innovative teachers. For example, Dever (2001) described the research of a type 4 parent involvement with family literacy bags, a project used to engage parents in children's school literacy activities (Burningham & Dever, 2005; Dever & Burts, 2002a, 2002b).

Epstein's theory (1995) will be expanded in the Review of Literature, where I cite key theoretical views in the area of human development from which TBks draw. First, Hart and Risley (1995) focus on the indelible nature of the child's developmental learning trajectory established during early family experiences and carried into the elementary grades and beyond (a condition on which PI in schooling is thought to have an effect [Cotton & Wikelund, 1989; Epstein, 1995]). Second, as explained in this chapter, Epstein (1995) advocates increased overlap of the child's spheres of influence, and Shockley and colleagues (1995) demonstrate how teachers can engage every child's parent [or a parent figure for every child] through "parallel practices. Third, a sociocognitive constructivist approach to a school's literacy program is explained by the theoretical views of Bandura (1986), Johnston (2004), Vygotsky (1978), and Wenger (1998).

Due to the underlying assumptions of TBks, conflicts exist in certain minor details of the theories advocated. One previously cited example of a conflict was the terminology used by Cotton and Wikelund (1989), which indicated that parent involvement might be "harnessed." This terminology suggests a one-way model of

parental involvement, incongruent with the intent of TBks and the terminology used in Shockley and colleagues (1995) parallel practices. Despite this limitation, the Cotton and Wikelund (1989) study provided information of value to this study.

My Involvement with Traveling Books

In fall of 1977, my 5-year-old son brought a traveling book home from Mrs. Stuart's kindergarten class. It was a teacher-made book consisting of a stack of students' work bound in a three-prong folder. A different child had created each page. The book fit inside a large envelope laminated with the words on front, "*It is important that children view themselves as authors. Please enjoy this book together as a Shared Reading Experience. Please return this book to school tomorrow so that others may read it, too.*"

We thumbed through the pages until we found my son's work, read it together, and then examined the work of his classmates. I made mental notes of how my son's work compared to that of his peers. Each month a different and more advanced TBk came home from his class. At the end of the year, he brought a year-end compilation of his contributions to the TBks. It was our keepsake of his writing progress over that year's time.

After receiving my teaching degree in 1979, I began working mid-year as a teacher of 32 first graders at the rural elementary school where my own children attended. I hoped to facilitate TBks similar to the ones my son had brought home, but my inexperience and the fast-paced curriculum in first grade prevented that. Several years later I taught fourth grade and finally, second grade, where I implemented a version of

TBks. A rubric was designed and sent home with each child asking them to author a family-based story with their parents' help. The directions were,

Our class is making a book of true dog stories entitled "Dogs in Our Lives." Please write and illustrate a story of a dog that you or your parents have known. Use one 8½" x 11" page that you provide, one side only. Be neat, clear, and precise in your work. Good luck! Your story will be due by Wednesday, Nov. 5, 1988.

Each student performed his or her home-authored story in front of the class, usually recounting family experiences with favorite pets. These performances provided opportunities to teach "audience skills" for active listening and responding. The performances were called "Author's Chair." After all the students had performed at Author's Chair the pages were bound into a TBk called "Dogs in Our Lives" and circulated to students' homes for SREs. The TBk was a highlight for that year. Two other second grade teachers sent rubrics home for interactive home writing (IHW) and I sent three IHW rubrics. Later, with more experience the other teachers and I realized that all people did not enjoy dogs. We changed this TBk title to "Pets in Our Lives." Still later, we encouraged students to make up their own titles about an animal that they or their parents had known. Every family responded to the rubrics, but the teachers did not know how parents had experienced IHW at home, or how parents had experienced TBks in general. Finally in 2005 I designed a pilot study with the help of Dr. Martha Dever (2005) to explore reciprocal energy and how the parents experienced IHW and TBks. A more detailed account of my TBk involvement is described in Appendix I, Bracketing Interview.

Findings of a Pilot Study to Explore Parents' Experiences with TBks

What I found from the pilot study strengthened my assumption that parents and teachers in a partnership are responsible for children's literacy learning and increased my confidence in using TBks as a vehicle for PI, particularly in using IHW as content for selected TBks in second grade. Key findings of the November 2005 pilot study were:

- In response to a survey question, parents rated TBks higher in interest if they [the parents] had participated in constructing them. [These were the *IHW* TBks].
- Parents in a 5-parent focus group described their struggles with IHW at home, but also described increased reciprocal energy or "bonding" which grew out of their struggles during these parent-child authoring experiences. One parent (FL) observed that "just getting through struggles together contributed to greater bonding with (my daughter)." Other parents agreed that TBks were "definitely worth the effort." No one suggested an alternative view. (Parents' focus group conducted November 10, 2005 in the school district board room).
- The elements of IHW were compared by parents to the elements of "practice and preparation to perform any of the arts" [several examples were given], and then of the common "stage-fright or risk which occurs in the presence of an audience" which usually includes peers. These elements [the *shared struggle to prepare* and then to *perform*] seemed the essence of increased student/parent/peer reciprocity. One of several examples follows.
 - KH described how she felt while her daughter sang a solo on stage in front of a large audience. She thought that her own face must have appeared calm and happy even though she felt "terrified inside" [for her daughter]. The daughter had looked in her direction during the entire song and responded to her smile by "performing her best." The drama of the reciprocity was, as KH described it, "moments frozen in time."
 - Others in the discussion suggested that such an intense phenomenon between mother and daughter may not have occurred had the daughter been singing in the family's living room at home instead of in a filled auditorium where peers and others were present. (From a parents' focus group conducted November 10, 2005, in the school district boardroom.)

- Conceptual change was evident in the faces of the parents of a performing child, even in a small audience of parents and peers. For example, the following notes describe my observation of parents watching their child perform at Author's Chair in a classroom:

November 17, 2005:

A student took his place at "Author's Chair" with his manuscript in hand. His peers were seated on the floor and his parents were seated at the back of the room with a few other parents who had just finished conducting centers with small groups of students. I stood behind the performer to support him if he needed help with decoding. His father at the back focused his attention on his performing son. The mother was sitting taller than normal, stretching her neck and smiling at her son. Her head was tilted back slightly. The student embarked on reading his story with his best fluency and expression. As he ended, several students' hands shot up to offer comments or to ask questions about his written piece. Authoritatively the performing student called on peers. The mother was leaning forward to see as much of who was talking as possible. The father was also leaning forward with his elbow on one knee. Both parents remained focused until after the peers had offered comments about their son's work and the parents had engaged in the audience's applause. The student's finished work was added to the class TBk. The same parents stayed to hear three other Author's Chair presentations, but both parents exhibited a more relaxed deportment, watching the students with casual interest. However, the parents were aware of their son's position within the group on the floor and he was aware of them, glancing back at them two or three times. The father looked at his watch twice during that time. The mother whispered to another parent several times during the presentations of other people's children.

- The data confirmed that peers were an important component of the reciprocal matrix of students, parents, and peers.
- The data yielded, first and foremost, how very much parents *care* that their children do well, regardless of their own parenting and mentoring skills.
- A consistent pattern emerged from the data to help define constructs of human reciprocal energy (Bandura, 1986), which I believe co-exists with how children learn. This reciprocal pattern, which included shared struggles and triumphs, may be compared to the claim that learning is cyclic (Gagne, 1985; Ausubel, 1980), requiring the recall of component skills to learn new skills (Driscoll, 2000, p. 345).
- This pilot study was based on the assumption that "*family* provides the K-3

learner's bedrock identity, from which his or her learning is situated.

Results of the pilot study increased my confidence to continue working to improve communications with parents through TBks and particularly in second grade to continue asking parents to help their children write two or three family-based stories for IHW TBks. Family knowledge from parents seemed to help students discover their own voices as authors among peers and seemed to give students purpose for stretching to learn how to write. Therefore, a few teachers continued to facilitate TBks, wanting the extra "literacy mileage" that TBks could provide. This was done despite pressures from federal initiatives for teachers to focus more exclusively on traditional methods of making adequate yearly progress (AYP; NCLB, 2006). The teachers felt that TBks were worth the effort and likely contributed toward making AYP.

Purpose, Research Questions, and Methodology of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to understand the nature of a TBk authoring community in kindergarten and second grade and to locate the essential elements (inputs) which triggered learning processes to occur in TBk projects. This study was based on the assumption that parents and teachers as partners are responsible for children's literacy learning, and on existing theory of how school, family, and community connect to influence children's learning (Epstein, 1995).

Research Questions

1. What are the essential elements (inputs) that trigger desirable learning

processes to occur in a TBk project, as experienced by kindergarten and second grade level students, parents, and teachers?

2. What theory supports teachers involving parents in TBk projects, and how can computer-based technology become part of that approach?

If the struggles and benefits parents and teachers experienced in a TBk project were better understood, improvements could be made in facilitations. If the complex and subtle social interactions within student/parent/peer authoring environments could be located and appraised, researchers might explain the essential elements of the TBk instructional model and the conditions under which it succeeds or fails. Findings need to be communicated to other teachers and researchers who may continue to refine and improve TBk pedagogy.

Methodology: Educational Criticism

Eisner's (1991) qualitative research approach, educational criticism, is the methodological lens chosen to identify and evaluate the essential elements of a TBk project and to organize and appraise the data that relate to each aspect of the research questions. Eisner's framework consists of five dimensions: intentional, structural, curricular, pedagogical, and evaluative. This framework provides a useful fit for investigating year-long TBk projects as the projects occurred naturally in public school classrooms. Eisner's framework will be used in this study to organize and analyze the physical structure and the complex and subtle qualities of sociocognitive interactions of students, parents, and peers in TBk literacy practice (Eisner, 1991, p. 3). A TBk project per se has not been studied, at least not in depth.

Significance of the Study

The effect that a parent could have on a child's motivation to learn in a peer-based authoring community cannot be over-stated. The Review of Literature, Section I, presents research findings to construct this case. A school's reading program generally advocates parent partnering, but the teacher is left to structure a specific system for equitable, effective PI, often limited to those parents who volunteer. The challenge that TBks added to the teacher's workload was to involve a parent (or a parent figure) for each student in the TBk project. After the first few months and seeing what other parents had contributed in TBks, the parents would begin carrying part of the teacher's load by helping their child proofread and edit a few short family-based stories at home. Notably, however, the teacher closed the gap between struggling and gifted peers in TBks by scaffolding struggling authors to succeed, beginning with the very first TBk of the year.

I take as a nonexample of a TBk classroom my own teaching experience prior to facilitating TBks. The six, second grade teachers in our elementary school often met and conversed over lunch. Two decades ago, our team of teachers was in agreement that "completing any kind of writing activity in second grade was a major undertaking" [due to struggling, unmotivated writers]. Writing was laborious for the majority of our students. Most of us failed to take seriously that second grade students should be expected to work through the entire writing process (pre-write, draft, revise, edit, and publish). A member of my second grade teaching team complained, "It is a chore to get second graders to write anything at all, let alone rewrite it with any kind of success" (from notes during the second grade team's review of English textbooks, fall 1989). Then

a few of us, seeking to meet the needs of learners, designed and facilitated TBks in our second grade classrooms patterned after Mrs. Stuart's kindergarten TBk project. Parents responded to the TBks and we discovered strategies to scaffold every struggling author to be successful (see Appendix A under *Strategies*). It was obvious that writing for peers and parents gave students increased purpose for stretching to learn the conventions to write, a sense of identity as authors in a peer authoring community, and an awareness of writing as a process. The teachers had not achieved this level of success using only the school's literacy textbooks.

Terminology

The terms "Traveling Books" and the acronym "TBks" are used interchangeably to refer to a student/parent/peer authoring community. The acronym, "TBk" is also used interchangeably with the term "traveling book" (lower case) to mean a single traveling book. Other terms used in special ways in this study include:

"Complex and subtle qualities" in educational criticism can be equivalent to the term "essence" or the "soul" of an experience in the phenomenological tradition.

Holistic means that a whole system of beliefs must be analyzed rather than simply its individual components (i.e., the theory, essential elements, and philosophy of TBks).

"Students' conceptions of authoring" refers to the student's understanding of their own roles in writing which become observable in behavior.

Literacy refers to reading and writing as a reciprocal process: each enhances the other.

Sociocognitive refers to a social cognitive learning environment (Bandura, 1986).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to conduct a qualitative inquiry into the nature of a TBk project. The study originated from my own experience with TBks. It was grounded chiefly in Epstein's (1995) existing theoretical position for increasing overlap of the learner's spheres of influence, home, school, and community. Epstein's theory will be expanded in the Review of Literature particularly by the theoretical positions of Hart and Risley (1995) and Shockley et al. (1995). This research utilizes Eisner's (1991) qualitative research approach, educational criticism, to organize and analyze the data.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section defines the constructs for bridging home, school, and community using TBks. The second section sets forth a rationale for engaging “a parent for every child” in the child’s peer-based authoring community. The third section presents justification for Internet development to promote TBk pedagogy.

Section I: Bridging Home, School, and Community

This section builds on the foundation of Epstein’s theoretical position (1995) for increasing overlap of the learner’s spheres of influence (home, school, and community), which was described in Chapter I. It is important to note that increasing overlap of the spheres means much more than simply “mixing” or “sharing” some event or object among the spheres. Instead, students, parents, and peers each assume a unique role toward the object of the overlap. Each sphere contributes something different to the whole. However, tools to routinely increase overlap of the three spheres [such as TBks] are rarely seen in today’s classroom practice. Instead, the literature generally focuses on parent partnering (while ignoring the element of peer involvement) or on cultivating community (while ignoring the element of parent involvement). However, if we combine both areas of research simultaneously, “parent partnering and cultivating community,” the need for a tool such as TBks is demonstrated. Further, if we examine research findings in the area of early childhood learning, the gravity of the parent’s *continued* role

in children's learning becomes apparent and the need to "engage a parent for every child" in a systematic aspect of children's peer-based literacy instruction in the early elementary grades is demonstrated.

Hart and Risley (1995) emphasize the permanence of a child's developmental learning trajectory, which is established during early family experience and carried into the elementary grades and beyond. Nevertheless, many school intervention programs, while seeking to "involve" parents, fail to perceive parents as their children's first (and still) most influential teachers. The Hart and Risley study focused on solutions that can exclude parents, thus conflicting with the assumption that parents and teachers as partners are responsible for children's literacy learning. However, the study provides valuable data to illustrate the problem of children and families lacking literacy skills.

Learning at School Begins at Home

The ways that children attend to education in the classroom is influenced by parental mentoring at home (Hart & Risley, 1995). Teachers who understand this process can use it to enhance their teaching. A critical feature of effective teaching is that "it elicits from students their pre-existing understanding of the concept to be taught and provides opportunities to build on—or challenge—the learner's initial understanding" (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000, p. 15). Building upon this prior knowledge in the child, effective teachers can put essential elements into place that will "stretch" the child to reach enduring new levels of understanding. The next five subsections focus on the learner's initial understanding, a critical foundation on which this study builds.

Home, a place where hard-wired trajectories are formed. The primary sphere of influence for young children is the family, a realization that invites a careful look at the ways in which family influence can affect school performance. Hart and Risley (1995) conducted a quantitative study of trends in amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction between the parents and young children from three socioeconomic (SES) groups. Their report in *The American Educator*, entitled “The Early Catastrophe: The 30-Million Word Gap by Age 3” (Hart & Risley, 2003), suggested permanent advantage or deprivation as a result. Baseline scores for participant children were established by age 1, and developmental trajectories were established by age 3. Seven years later, posttests were administered to the same children to determine the average developmental growth for each SES group (Hart & Risley, 1995, 1999, 2003). Results show an widening gap between levels of development in each group (see Figure 2-1).

It was demonstrated, despite the effects of school interventions—which washed out fairly early—that test performance in third grade can indeed be predicted by the child’s accomplishments at age 3. Extrapolating the trajectory on a graph verified in a startling way the continued widening of the gap of cognitive and language development in adolescence and beyond.

Hart and Risley’s finding (1995) that the effects of school interventions often washed out early may indicate that an essential element was missing from the interventions, leaving the child to readjust to the original deficient trajectory. Thus, if a child’s ongoing involvement in reading is crucial for continued language development from childhood to adolescence and beyond, and if schools, teachers, and peers are

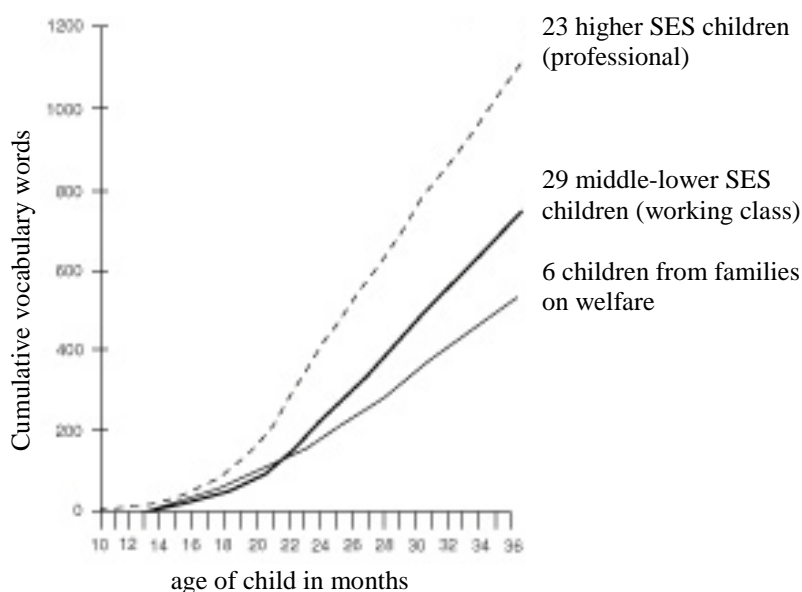


Figure 2-1. Children's vocabularies differ greatly across income groups (Hart & Risley, 2003; used with permission).

providing that involvement, we are left wonder, what was missing from the intervention which allowed it to wash out?

Lifelong developmental trajectories. A recent study published in the *Journal of Pediatrics* (Zimmerman, Christakis, & Meltzoff, 2007) indicated that even the time babies spend watching television—including “educational” television—may harm, rather than help language development because it replaces time that might otherwise be spent interacting, unless the television is being watched *with* a parent and it fosters increased parent-child interaction. Zimmerman and colleagues’ study claimed that babies learn far more than language from adults speaking to them in “parentese”—that special singsongy way adults often talk with babies, typically with exaggerated facial expressions. Babies learn not only language, but also an entire general approach to experience and problem solving, including habits of seeking, noticing, and incorporating new and more complex

experiences, as well as schemas for categorizing and thinking about experiences. Hart and Risley (1995, 1999) referred to the animated interactions between a parent and young child as a “social dance.” Hart and Risley (1999) argued, “When we looked at what was happening between the parents and children during the months the children were learning to talk, we saw the intergenerational transmission of the particular social dance practiced in the family” (p. xii). They described the developmental phases of interactivity and the learning of the “dance,” as talk became increasingly embedded in turn taking and conversation. “Children get better at what they practice, and having more language tools, more problem-solving approaches, more nuances, more fluency, more steps in the social dances of life” is likely to contribute to their future success (Hart & Risley, 1999, p. xiii).

Windows of opportunity. Specific types of learning are accelerated during certain critical periods of rapid brain development early in children’s lives. Shore (1997) defined this development as a process that “hard wires the brain.” He referred to these periods as “windows of opportunity.” Some of these stages of development were more forgiving than others, meaning that they leave the brain structures flexible and allow accelerated development, extending up to age 10. Parental influence on children’s early learning cannot be underestimated (Shore, 1997). However, when children enter school, parents traditionally remain apart from the classroom (Keyser, 2006). This obligation usually leaves teachers in control of how and when to engage parents.

Students’ choice. Epstein (1995) emphasized that students are the main actors in their success in school. She points out that partnership activities may only be designed to engage, guide, energize, and motivate students to produce their own successes.

Accordingly, the impact of choice on one's developmental trajectory was discussed in terms of the "magnifying power of time" by G. Campbell.

As part of my work, I helped build a small sensor package to put on the robot arm of a Mars lander (scheduled to fly in August, 2007). Obviously, the space craft has capability for correcting its course as it goes along, but if it didn't and we were trying to aim it as it left the earth, a mistake in our aim by a hundredth of a degree, so small an angle as to be imperceptible to us, would result in an error of over 6000 miles at our destination. The same thing is true in our lives. If we consider the consequences of small but important choices [or events]...if we project ahead 10 or 50, or 500 years, where will we be?" (G. Campbell, personal communication, April 2007).

By the magnifying power of time, small but significant interactions among a child's spheres of influence may result in significant, enduring benefits to his or her academic and personal achievement over time. Small things, such as a short family-based input for a peer audience at school, could set a child's trajectory on a higher, more achievement-oriented course. On the other hand, the hard-fought skills learned in many school interventions without supportive interactivity among the child's spheres of influence may be deemed by the learner as insignificant enough to fade or wash out in time, leaving the learner on his or her original at-risk trajectory, headed for school failure with long-term social consequences (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Providing Extra Support for Nonresponding Parents

Some parents, like some students, require extra individual support or scaffolding from teachers to know how to become engaged in a schooling task. Nevertheless, many teachers may be willing to try involving "a parent for every student" in a literacy venture [such as TBks], "for which teachers are so well-positioned" (Keyser, 2006, p. 9), if an

equitable, effective system or routine can be established to help the occasional unresponsive parent or to receive the parent's directive in providing a "parent figure" for their child.

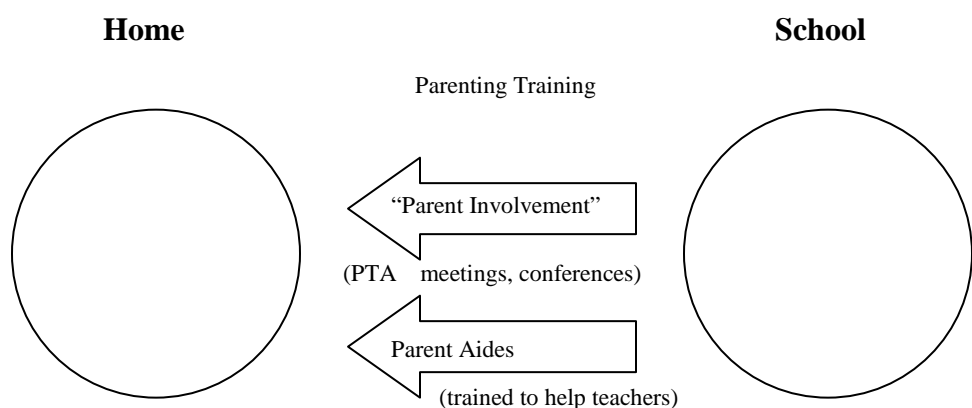
The previously cited literature has emphasized factors that affect the child during optimal periods of brain growth during early family experience and the resultant developmental trajectory already set on a seemingly unchangeable course. Parents (or parent figures) generally continue as their children's primary sphere of influence long after early childhood yet traditionally parents remain apart from the classroom when children enter school. Some children entering school seem already set on an advantaged turnpike while others seem set on a disadvantaged path filled with large stumbling stones. Suddenly the teacher is left in control of how, when, and whether to invite parent involvement in children's schooling. The following sections will review elements to guide solutions.

Parallel Practices

Epstein emphasized the significance of increasing overlap of home, school, and community as much as possible so that the spheres that shape a child's life can work more closely together. If schools promote activities (such as TBks) to improve home-school partnering, the child's prior experience at home will more likely mesh with activities at school, allowing new knowledge to transfer more readily to applications beyond the classroom. On the other hand, if major conflicts exist among the child's spheres of influence (see Figure 1-1) the child may be left to choose between inconsistent options rather than achieving success in all the spheres (Epstein, 1995).

Shockley and colleagues (1995) were dissatisfied with traditional home-school partnering which emphasized a “parent-deficit” approach. These attempts, though well meaning, are most often limited to their underlying belief that parents should change or should give something to the school; few facilitate a two-way interaction between home and school (see Figure 2-2). Such school-based programs have tended to engage the participation of advantaged parents, but not of low-income parents (McLaughlin & Shields, 1987, as cited in Shockley et al., 1995, p. 92). Shockley and colleagues added, “Unfortunately, few parent involvement programs invite either teachers or families to participate in program development. The school either did the program right or wrong, good parents participated and not-so-good parents didn’t, and the responsibility lay primarily with one person—the principal or a parent involvement program coordinator” (p. 92).

Shockley et al. (1995) then extended the literacy community from one-way



Shockley et al. (1995, p. 92)

Figure 2-2. Traditional one-way models of parent involvement often assume a “home-deficit approach,” seeking to “train” parents in the ways of the mainstream society.

models of parent involvement to parallel practices (Figure 2-3). Shockley and colleagues believed that,

“Parents cared, and [we] offered a way [for them] to reenter schooling without requiring they be physically present for a roll call of good parents.” (1995, p. 95).

In contrast to one-way traditions of parent involvement (Figure 2-2), Shockley and colleagues (1995) presented a model for parent involvement based on core values of respect and belief in family knowledge and caring. This parent involvement came about through a yearlong process of oral and written dialogue through parents and teachers responding in the pages of students’ daily home-school journals (p. 26). Graves (1995) wrote in the Foreword to Shockley and colleagues that teachers and parents “are busy people...who have found the means to cooperate together for the sake of their children,” thus creating grounds for parallel practices by defining the types of knowledge that can be shared between home and school (see Figure 2-3).

Obstacles to Home-School Interactivity

While school administrators scramble to meet government requirements for involving parents in school-wide programs, teachers may remain untrained in the cultural paradigms of their patron families and thus have as little as possible to do with home-school interactions (Keyser, 2006; Trumbull et al., 2001). Thus, educators may fail to involve all parents, particularly those from minority communities. Programs that accommodate volunteer parents, or sessions that teach parenting skills from the perspectives of the school’s mainstream population do represent steps forward, but if

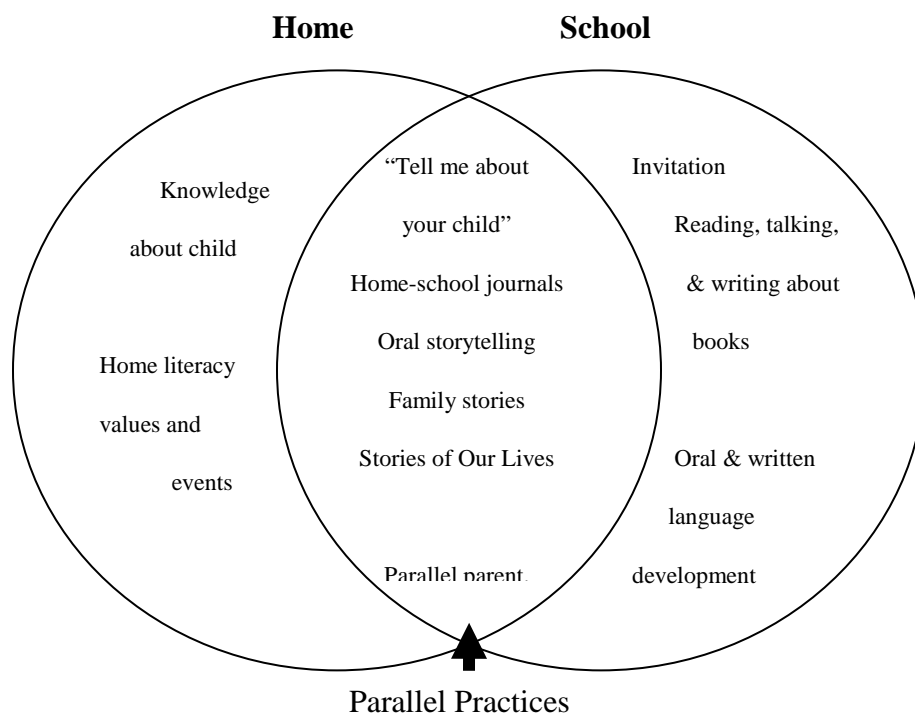


Figure 2-3. Parallel practices: Extending the literacy community (Shockley et al., 1995).

some parents are left out, the educational needs of those families remain unmet—which impacts the children of those families (Trumbull et al., 2001).

Section II: Rationale for Including Parents in Peer

Authoring Communities

TBk projects advocate the building of student/parent/peer authoring communities. Each sphere of influence; home, school, and community, will be considered in this section separately with respect to its effect on the other spheres.

Home: Parents need Guidance to Know How to Help Their Children

Research has repeatedly shown that parents, particularly minority parents, are

interested in becoming involved in their children's education. However, cross-cultural value conflicts may arise, leading Latino immigrant parents from Mexico and Central America to desire one kind of involvement based on a cultural paradigm of collectivism, while school personnel may have strong preferences for more individualistic academic values (Quiroz & Greenfield, 1996). Other studies report interest on the part of teachers and administrators to facilitate parental involvement but without providing the necessary conditions to support it (Chavkin & Williams, 1993). For educators, meeting the parents' need for guidance to help their children means listening to the parents, seeking to understand cultural orientations, and communicating respect through Parallel Practices (Shockley et al., 1995). Parallel practices means that each side, home and school, appreciate and respect the other's areas of expertise. It may be far more important to the child's developmental trajectory for the parent to participate in some small way than for a knowledge concept to be represented by the parent according only to the school's standard. Trumbull and colleagues (2001) said, "Parents can serve as sources of cultural knowledge about the community, but schools need to provide them mechanisms to do so" (p. 50). TBks can be considered such a mechanism.

School: Conceptualizing the Teacher's Role in Parent Involvement

Regardless of students' hard-wired developmental trajectories being already in place when students enter the classroom (Hart & Risley, 1995; Shore, 1997), current federal and state initiatives require teachers to assume accountability for students making adequate yearly progress (AYP; NCLB, 2006). However, the permanence of the

differences that teachers can make may hinge on the degree to which the family of each child is also committed to their son or daughter's progress. Research findings point increasingly toward the teacher's role as instructional nurturer of families (Keyser, 2006; Shockley et al., 2005; Trumbull et al., 2001). This supportive role increases parents' accountability and places schoolteachers in a "wonderful position," according to Keyser, to demonstrate multicultural respect while monitoring clear expectations for parents and families. An effective teacher may scaffold not only for student learning in sociocognitive classrooms, but also for engaging parents in children's schooling experiences through a simple vehicle, such as TBks (Bandura, 1986; Keyser, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Shockley et al., 2005; Trumbull et al., 2001).

Community: Reciprocity Among Parents, Peers, and the Child

Social reciprocal energy can be described as the positive reciprocity between individuals as they interact socially, each lending to the other impetus for increased depth in the interaction (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. As children develop and gain more independence, peers become an increasingly important influence on their learning (Hart & Risley, 1995), while parents remain an important influence.

The social nature of learning in classrooms can be greatly enhanced by a brief sense of parent presence at the same time. Examples of peers and parents simultaneously influencing a child's presentation include program performances or sporting events with

the child as a member of a playing team. Observable conceptual change can be apparent in children's faces as well as in the observed energy with which the children are able to perform when parents are present in the child's peer environment. Increased focus can also be observed in the parents' faces while they are watching their own child perform as compared to a more relaxed demeanor while watching other people's children perform. On the other hand, it can be obvious to an observer that a child whose family member is missing may not display equal deportment or receive equal benefits for learning that his or her peers receive who do have family present. Similarly, the child practicing the performance without peers, with only parents present generally lacks the level of focus displayed when parents and peers are *both* present. These observations were evident in the data of my pilot study with Dever (2001), and are consistent with Epstein's (1995) theory of parent partnering and Bandura's (1986) social-cognitive and reciprocal energy theories. Bandura's social-cognitive theory was based on the idea that people learn by watching what others do. The environment, behavior, and cognition are not static or independent factors; rather, they are all reciprocal. My observations of reciprocal energy as evidenced by conceptual change in students and parents are also consistent with Wenger's (1998) theory for building community and the seven principles for cultivating communities of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Wenger and colleagues seven principles were developed to focus on the dilemmas at the heart of designing communities of practice (such as TBks). Wenger and colleagues asked,

What is the role of design for a "human institution" that is, by definition, natural, spontaneous, and self-directed? How do you guide such an institution to realize itself, to become "alive"?

From our experience we have derived seven principles: (1) Design for evolution. (2) Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives. (3) Invite different levels of participation. (4) Develop both public and private community spaces. (5) Focus on value. (6) Combine familiarity and excitement. (7) Create a rhythm for the community. (Wenger et al., 2002)

Wenger and colleagues (2002) supported and explained the logic for building community among students, parents, and peers, for designing technologies to help teachers facilitate such communities, and for engaging “a parent [or parent figure] for every child” in peer authoring communities.

A Student/Parent/Peer Authoring Community

Existing literature rarely discusses the role that parental involvement can play in sociocognitive peer learning environments. Neither does the literature on parent partnering generally focus on the roles that peers can play in environments where parents are engaged in children’s schooling experiences. However, this study focuses specifically on the roles of both parents and peers in TBk authoring communities. By increasing overlap of home, school, and community through TBks (Epstein, 1995), we are attempting to enlarge the learning theories that work in multiple spheres (Bandura, 1986; Trumbull et al., 2001; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 2001). Certainly, teachers may enhance children’s learning by eliciting small “treasures of family knowledge” from parents for use in classroom instruction (Trumbull et al., 2001). The recipients of this family knowledge include the child’s peers, a condition that can create excitement and interest in the instruction that accompanies it. Accordingly, my pilot study to explore reciprocal energy among students, parents, and peers in a TBk environment (Dever, 2001), demonstrated that parents’ simple contributions to peer environments indeed triggered

reciprocal energy, which resulted in observable improvements in students' writing behaviors. The pilot study showed that the intensity of reciprocity among students, parents, and peers depended upon the presence of specific criteria, such as the amount of shared sacrifice, preparation, or effort involved in meeting the challenge to contribute or perform, and then the consequential shared triumph. The greatest struggle or sacrifice that families described in a TBk project was in writing family-based stories at home for peer audiences (IHW). It was these IHW TBks (with which families had struggled) that most parents and students rated highest in interest in their survey responses. Thus, internet-assisted training may be developed from the findings of the pilot study and particularly from the findings of this study to help teachers understand what goes on in a student/parent/peer authoring community. The following section is a discussion of my preconceived ideas about Internet development.

Section III: Justification for Internet Development to Promote TBks

Internet sites for early literacy learning are numerous and exciting to think about. Many of these sites focus on drill and practice of literacy skills, providing opportunities for children to interact with the computer. Some educational applications incorporate gaming with skills acquisition. Some support user interfaces that prekeyboarding children can readily use. However, few if any of these sites seek to increase overlap of a child's spheres of influence or provide compelling interactivity among home, school, and community. If computer environments are to represent the values intended by TBk pedagogy, the computer environments need to increase overlap among children's spheres

of influence and build community for authoring.

Two categories are considered for future internet development to promote TBks. First, internet-assisted instruction for teachers and parents to help them facilitate classroom TBk projects might be immediately justifiable and would be based on findings of this study. Second, an online student/parent/peer authoring environment might be designed after aspects of the paper version used in this study. Concerns and criteria for Internet development are explored here.

Internet Safety Concerns for Children

Concerns of child safety on the Internet are a primary deterrent to promoting interactive sites among young children and their peers on the Internet. Adding a brief element of parental and pedagogical presence to a well-designed site may help to change this situation. For example, busy parents would not likely spend as much time online as their child might spend, say, in an online peer-authoring environment. However, with interactive and administrative tools for parents (and also for teachers) on the child's peer-based authoring site, it could be possible for the parent to see what was going on at any time, leave an asynchronous comment or icon to represent their presence, and have the capability to receive and edit their child's work. Finally, when the child completes a piece of work, the parent could authorize it for posting online for peers and the teacher to see. These ideas only represent an exploration of possibilities.

Criteria for Future Interactive Online TBk Environments

Today's technologies will support child-friendly interactivity among students,

parents, and peers on the World Wide Web, but complex and careful research is needed to guide the development of such environments. For example, technologies that support massively multi-learner online learning environments (MMOLEs) might provide persuasive entry paths for students to meet their peers, parents, and teachers online (Kapp, 2007), but once online, what then? How will the building of community come into play to generate “aliveness” and “volunteerism” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 50) in a multi-sphere environment? How will the interests of members from different spheres be protected? Teams of subject matter experts (SMEs) in the fields of psychology, the learning sciences, and computer sciences would need to understand the principles and theory underlying TBks in order to design and develop appropriate TBk literacy mechanisms. My preconceived guidelines include the following.

Provide graphical user interfaces with icons for pre-keyboarding students on emergent and beginning reading levels to enable them to communicate with adults, “or collaborate with more capable peers.” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

Provide motivating, purposeful, safe literacy instruction embedded in student/parent/peer community environments.

Guide parents in positioning themselves briefly (in a supportive role without hovering) in their child’s peer computer environment. (Alberta Education, 1995-2008)

Empower teachers to facilitate the literacy mechanisms with contextualized formative and summative assessments (Bransford et al., 2000; Eisner, 1991) and with dynamic feedback capabilities.

These preconceived guidelines were based on my concerns as a researcher. The usefulness of future computer-assisted mechanisms to promote student/parent/peer authoring communities may be measured or evaluated by the degree to which use of the

computer increases overlap among children's spheres of influence and builds community for authoring.

Internet-Assisted Training for Teachers and Parents in TBk Pedagogy

One aim of this study is to understand how computer-based technology can help teachers to involve parents in TBks. Development of an Internet-assisted training site for teachers and parents can include tutorials, videotaped demonstrations, interactive features, templates, lesson plans, FAQs, and specific tools to help teachers involve “a parent for every child” in TBks. The findings of this study may help to define criteria for such a site.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Methodology of Educational Criticism

Dr. Elliot Eisner's (1991) qualitative research approach, educational criticism, is the methodological lens chosen to identify and evaluate the essential elements of a TBk project. It also provides guidelines to organize and appraise the data pertaining to each aspect of the research questions. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Eisner evaluates teaching and learning in terms of five dimensions of schooling: intent, structure, curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation. Eisner's view of how evaluations should be done in these and possibly in other dimensions is founded on his epistemological perspectives and assumptions, as described in the following sub-sections.

Relationship Between the Methodological Assumptions and the Focus

Eisner's work is influenced by Dewey (1934), whose epistemological views were pragmatic. Eisner's vision of research includes a pragmatic assumption that "what works" can be accepted as true. Driscoll (2000) explained,

For the most part, pragmatists hold absolute knowledge as a worthy, but probably unreachable, goal. Thus, they emphasize theories of meaning—of what works—with the understanding that what works may not reflect reality, but to the extent that it can, it should. Their theories are more like hypotheses, accepted and used for as long as evidence supports them. (p. 15).

Peha (2003) added, "There's no practice like best practice," as teachers implement research in the rhetoric of professional teaching and what works in their own

experience. The search for ways to systematize “what works” has dominated educational research, and much research has depended on experimental studies in an effort to get teaching down to a science. While trying to systematize instruction as much as possible, it should not be forgotten that teaching is an art (Dewey, 1934; Gage, 1978, as cited in Eisner, 1991, p. 78). Eisner argued, “what works” in teaching, as well as what works in a specific genus of music or literature, is based on different “genres” of teaching. For example, in the assessment of a musical piece, it is not necessary to appraise the merits of one genre of music by using criteria that are appropriate to another. Thus, understanding how to appraise varying genres and contexts of teaching is a mark of expertise, or as Eisner would say, a mark of “educational connoisseurship” (Eisner, 1991, p. 79). Eisner takes as his research laboratory the normal daily life going on in schools to study what works and what does not work in classroom practice, but he recognizes the artistic nature of expert performance. Expertise is valued as a means of seeing and reporting accurately, as an “educational critic.”

Focus of this study. What goes on in TBk projects is the focus of this study, particularly students’ conceptions of authoring, the changes in their writing behaviors, and elements of their writing performance that persist over time within student/parent/peer authoring communities. Eisner (1991) explained that such a focus is the very essence of Educational Criticism, which depends upon the expertise of the evaluator in the subject being evaluated. Eisner (1991) argued,

Criticism is an art of saying useful things about complex and subtle objects and events so that others less sophisticated, or sophisticated in different ways, can see and understand what they did not see and understand before. (p. 3).

An assumption of expertise. Eisner's (1991) methodology included an assumption that the evaluator possesses expertise in the subject being observed. From a parent's perspective, I experienced TBks designed by my child's teacher. From a teacher's perspective, I designed and facilitated TBks with other teachers and on three occasions have presented professional development about TBk projects. I am experienced in using TBks as pedagogy for parent involvement in classroom literacy instruction with the age group under study. Expertise is at the heart of Eisner's (1991) method. My experiences have increased my understanding of how teachers involving parents in TBks can enhance a school's reading program.

Eisner's view of expertise. One's appreciation of a TBk environment depends upon one's experience and ability to understand something about its qualities. Accordingly, the following quotation by Vladimir Nabokov, edited by Eisner to explain his own position, equated reality with expertise.

Reality is an infinite succession of steps [and] levels of perception. A lily is more real to a naturalist than it is to the ordinary person. But it is still more real to the botanist. And yet another stage of reality is reached with that botanist who is a specialist in lilies. (Vladimir Nabokov, as cited in Eisner, 1991, p. 63)

Eisner makes clear that educational criticism required the art of appreciation. To appreciate a quality is not to say that one likes it, but to rather recognize it for what it is. He claims, "What is required (or desired [of an educational connoisseur]) is that our experience be complex, subtle, and informed." An educational critic can also represent what is appreciated to others (Eisner, 1985, p. 104; 1991, p. 69). In addition, see Appendix A under "appreciation."

Two Modes of Observing: Recognizing and Perceiving

An objective of this research is to understand not only *what* goes on in TBk environments, but also *how* it transpires. Dewey (1934) differentiated between these two modes of observing: “The process of categorization (what occurs) he called recognition. The process of visual exploration (how things occur) he called perception” (in Eisner, 1991, p. 7). In defense of Dewey’s insight, Eisner argued that “Knowledge is made, not simply discovered. In other words, human knowledge is a constructed form of experience and therefore a reflection of mind as well as nature” (Eisner, 1991, p. 7). To illustrate what happens, the first research question for this study asked, “What are the essential elements (inputs) that trigger desirable learning processes to occur in a TBk project...?” The triggering is what Dewey called recognition, or the student’s cognitive categorization of something that has transpired. The learning processes that followed he called perception. Empirical verification that the student has perceived something lies in the work that the student will produce or perform as a result. Likewise, the evaluator also recognizes and then perceives. The fact that the title to Eisner’s book is *The Enlightened Eye* (1991) suggested how important these processes of recognizing and perceiving are to his theory.

Eisner argued further that to share what [the researcher] has seen required the ability to communicate it in a way that does justice to the qualities observed. He suggested that more detail was needed in an educational evaluation than standardized tests alone can provide. He explained,

This process is one of criticism...in the sense in which it is used in literature, film,

and the arts. I have called this form of criticism Educational Criticism.... In education, as in sports, simply knowing the final score of the game after it is over is not very useful. What we need is a vivid rendering of how that game is being played. (Eisner, 1985, p. 130)

By providing a vivid rendering of the complex and subtle interactivity in TBk environments and the effects it may have on students' conceptions of authoring and their writing behaviors, patterns may emerge that point to the essential elements of TBk projects that could be replicated. Studying the educational activity as it occurs naturally within the TBk literacy environments, without constraining, manipulating, or controlling predetermined variables, should provide opportunities toward answering the research questions.

Framework: Eisner's Dimensions of Schooling

Educational criticism evaluates schooling in terms of five dimensions (Eisner, 1991). This framework provides an appropriate "fit" to assess the qualities of TBk projects, and was useful in organizing my preconceived ideas about what this study could yield in terms of Eisner's dimensions: intent, structure, curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation.

The Intentional Dimension

This dimension refers to the aims or goals formulated for the school or a classroom. Appropriate goals depend on a host of considerations, such as who the students are, what is in their long-term best interest, and whose perspectives and values are considered. On such matters, there will always be more than one view (Eisner, 1991,

p. 73). The difference between intended aims and operationalized aims in a classroom is of particular importance. For instance, a teacher or a school district may “endorse one kind of outcome, but in practice emphasize quite another” (Eisner, 1991, p. 73).

TBks and the intentional dimension. The intent of the teachers who participated in this study was to increase overlap among children’s spheres of influence: home, school, and community (Epstein, 1995), within the curriculum of writing. The participant teachers unanimously recognized parents as the child’s first and most influential teachers. Thus, the teachers assumed a supporting role for families, choosing to design and facilitate TBks to provide an avenue of access for parents to the classroom literacy instruction. In a typical classroom the teachers’ task is to diagnose, prescribe, structure schooling for affective and objective outcomes, instruct, provide guided practice, assess, and to coach parents’ efforts to help their children learn. Part of the teacher’s intent for asking parents to collaborate with their child to author a family-based story was to create opportunities for parents to mentor working on a small piece of purposeful writing of which the child could feel ownership.

Questions about TBks in the intentional dimension. Exactly what do we mean by the “desirable learning processes” that we intend to trigger through TBk projects? How do we know if “desirable learning processes” have occurred? What is involved in the act of writing? Vygotsky (1962) gave us the clearest theoretical picture of what happens when children actually write—and we ourselves are usually unaware of what Vygotsky described. Graves (1983) took Vygotsky’s paradigm and used a young child’s writing to show how Vygotsky’s theory becomes manifest in what children do. Graves’

illustration could describe a 7-year-old, a doctoral student, or a professional writer. All go through the same process of reduction, as viewed through the eyes of an observant teacher.

Alison reread her first sentence. She frowned and bit into the soft wood of her pencil; a tear formed in the corner of her eye. Glaring at the paper she muttered, "Stupid," and crumpled her paper into a ball. Alison was in sixth grade and wanted to write about the death of her dog, Muffin. The first line didn't do justice to her feelings.

Each day Alison writes in class. Today is Wednesday, and since Monday she had known she would write about the death of her dog. Since then, a series of images and impressions have rehearsed their way to the surface for inclusion in her story about Muffin. Last year she would have poured a torrent of words and sentences onto the page. This year she is a dissatisfied writer. She is paralyzed by her range of options as well as the apparent inability of her initial words to meet her personal expectations.

What Alison doesn't know is that what reaches the page is the end result of a long line of reductions from an original swirl of memories about her dog. Since Monday, Alison has been rehearsing a host of images and memories. But when she writes, she can only choose one to work on at a time. Alison chooses the image of Muffin on the bed next to her. Since Alison's communication will use words, she now converts her image to words. The words swirl in telegraphic form and in no particular order. Her final act is to put the words in an order that others will understand: "I felt him on the bed next to me." Compared with the range of images and words Alison has entertained in the process of writing, the sentence is but a ghost of her impressions. A year ago Alison would have assumed the missing material was represented in the sentence. Not now. She knows that words are inadequate. Worse, she does not see any promise in them for reworking. Alison is stalled.

...What teacher hasn't heard these words: "I'm stuck. This is dumb. It's no use. Now what do I do?" Essentially these writers are asking, "Where am I?" They feel the lack in their words, which have been reduced from richer images and intentions. They don't know where the sentence before fits in with their original, overall story. Fear even blurs the images and words that once seemed so real in rehearsal.

Teachers can answer children's questions only if they know the process from both the inside and the outside. They [the teachers] know it from the inside because they work at their own writing; they know it from the outside because they are

acquainted with research that shows what happens when people write (Graves, 1994, p. 69).

Understanding the process of reduction and Vygotsky's theory of what happens when we write helps us to converse more meaningfully with students about their writing (Graves, 1994). We may begin a conference by pursuing the dimensions of past ("Excuse me, Jennifer, can you tell me what your piece is about?"), present ("Where are you in the piece right now?"), and future ("If you finish this piece tomorrow, what will you do with it? Who will read it?"). The intent of conferencing with students within an authoring community such as TBks is to find ways of increasing the author's purpose and motivation for writing, or in other words, to find ways to trigger "desirable learning processes."

The Structural Dimension

The structural dimension refers to how the school day or year is divided and how subjects are assigned to time blocks and locations, how curriculum is scheduled in units and sub-units, and even how classroom furniture is arranged to influence what students learn. "Understanding the influence of an organizational structure in schools provides a basis for considering its utilities and liabilities, its benefits and costs. It allows us to consider other ways of doing things" (Eisner, 1991, p. 74).

TBks and the structural dimension. Graves (1994) recognized structure as one of "Seven Conditions for Effective Writing." He argued for devoting even more writing time in class than this study has structured for TBks.

If students are not engaged in writing at least four days out of five, and for a period of thirty-five or forty minutes, beginning in first grade, they will have little

opportunity to learn to think through the medium of writing. Three days a week are not sufficient. There are too many gaps between the starting and stopping of writing for this schedule to be effective. (Graves, 1994, p. 103)

Structuring TBk projects includes student tasks such as the student librarians' daily checking out of TBks and accounting for them the next morning, time for Author's Chair, Silent Sustained Writing time, Literature-Sharing, and applying time-saving management strategies for replicating or altering basic types of TBks.

Questions about TBks in the structural dimension. A new teacher might ask how other teachers have integrated TBks with their daily 90-minute literacy block. Which components and timeframes have worked well? The teachers would want to understand the "community" structure and ideology behind a student/parent/peer TBk authoring environment. For example, what role do busy parents play, particularly single parents or those who may hold down two jobs outside the home? What role is played by peers? What is the teacher's role? Eisner asserts, "What is needed...[in answer to these] questions [is] 'thick description' of how TBk environments function (Geertz, 1974, as cited in Eisner, 1991, p 182) replete with metaphor, contrast, redundancy, and emphasis that captures some aspect of the quality and character of educational life" [to understand how to structure a TBk facilitation] (Eisner, 1985, p. 111).

The Curricular Dimension

Teachers may ask how TBk curriculum compares with the well-known writing instruction guides called "6-traits" or "six +1 traits," which are integrated with most major literacy programs. Specifically, how are writing traits and the writing process taught through TBks? The *traits* include ideas, organization, voice, sentence fluency,

word choice, and conventions; also, presentation, genre, audience, and other qualities of writing. Further, how does the *process* of writing integrate with the traits? The writing process generally includes five steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, not necessarily in that order.

TBks and the curricular dimension. In the teachers' experience, applying TBk writing curriculum over the course of a school year resulted in experiences and artifacts of writing to be judged. Eisner noted that the level of confidence we can place in the educational critic's description, interpretation, and evaluation of classroom life can be judged empirically by testing his or her remarks against the phenomena s/he attempts to describe (Eisner, 1985, p. 114), which in this case are the resultant experiences and artifacts of writing. It could also be judged against a video recording, but that step was not taken in this case.

Questions about TBks in the curricular dimension. According to Eisner (1991), goals for curriculum may be judged by several considerations, such as the importance of the writing curriculum as a discipline. How is its importance being interpreted by the teacher and understood by students? How is the content encountered? Does it engage students? Do the activities elicit higher order thinking? Can students apply their new knowledge in other contexts? What is the boundary strength, or in other words, what is the connection between this subject and other subjects? (Bernstein, 1971, as cited in Eisner, 1991, p. 76). Who frames and integrates the activities—the teacher, the student, or the curriculum guide? In what manner is learning fostered? Eisner asked how peers were involved as follows.

“Is children’s encounter with the curriculum viewed as one in which children travel alone on their own tracks, pursuing an individualized but personally isolated journey, or as one in which they have opportunities to work with others? (1991, p. 76)

The specific focus of TBk activities was to implement the objectives of a school’s literacy instruction in practice with students, parents, and peers. How can TBks simplify the task? Can TBks enhance the outcome? How can TBks be improved as a tool for these activities?

The Pedagogical Dimension

This dimension refers to teaching. Eisner notes that two points about teaching are particularly relevant to educational connoisseurship: First, virtually all curricula are mediated by a teacher. Second, what students learn is never limited to what teachers intend to teach or to the content. Some aspects of pedagogy include example, covert cues, emphasis, rewards, level of affection [respect], and clarity of explanations (Eisner, 1991, p. 77)

TBks and the pedagogical dimension. For evaluating teachers, Eisner recommended (1991, p. 78), that it was reasonable not to relinquish ideals, but to also consider the context and aims of the teacher. This widened consideration is likely to make the interpretation more defensible and more equitable. For example, in the arts we would expect to find different kinds of excellence rooted in different genres of music, painting, and poetry. The qualities of each require different competencies to produce, and different criteria to evaluate. Therefore, it is with teaching, which also contains a multitude of genres. In teaching, even one genre, such as lecturing, can take many forms.

Recognizing these genres is a mark of a sophisticated observer, a connoisseur. On the other hand, selecting inappropriate criteria for appraising teaching may be analogous to trying to evaluate a musical piece by the number of F flats it contains (Eisner, 1991).

Other theorists agree. For instance, Graves (1994) argued, “You, the teacher, are the most important factor in creating a learning environment in the classroom” (p. 109). Wenger (1998) suggested that building a sustainable authoring community is a pedagogical achievement. Teachers who implement parallel practices (Shockley et al., 1995) help to bring about conditions for including parents in an asynchronous way in the peer-based community.

Eisner (1991) suggested that students who were bored by what they study and were unenthusiastic and reluctant to act without reward are a topic of concern (p. 181). One index of engagement is the students’ voluntary activity; whether a student would rather work on classroom projects than go out to recess or leave school for the day, what students choose to work on during their free periods, and how they interact with peers over such matters. Time on task and smooth transitions from one engagement to another are other indicators of engagement. The pedagogical trick is to build the curriculum so that “the incentives for learning are intrinsic to the activity” (Eisner, 1991, p. 180). I would like to suggest that student engagement in TBk projects is an important sub-category of the pedagogical dimension of schooling and that looking for incentives for learning that are intrinsic is part of the researcher’s task.

Questions about TBks in the pedagogical dimension. The researcher in this dimension should keep in mind the ideals of TBks while considering the context and aims

of individual teachers. How has the teacher structured TBks in the classroom? What importance does the teacher place on writing or authoring? What strategies does the teacher employ in writing instruction? How are the strategies employed? How do students respond? In addition, how do students spend their free time? Having TBks and Author Folders accessible to students, how often are these accessed as a voluntary activity? How do students interact with peers regarding TBks and writing? How many students are bored, unenthusiastic, and reluctant to act on TBk activities?

The Evaluative Dimension

Eisner argues that testing and evaluation practices are among the most powerful forces influencing the priorities and climate of schools. “How these evaluation practices are employed, what the practices address and what they neglect, and the form in which evaluations occur speak forcefully to students about what adults believe is important.” “I believe no effort to change schools can succeed without designing an approach to evaluation that is consistent with the aims of the desired change (Eisner, 1991, p. 81). Briefly, Eisner recommends a variety of formative and summative assessments to monitor and communicate progress frequently between student and teacher, and occasionally with parents, to articulate the qualities achieved and goals for further learning.

TBks and the evaluative dimension. TBk projects seem to lend themselves to “automatic” assessments through the normal processes of TBk facilitation throughout the year. Assessment outcomes can be discussed in student-teacher and parent-teacher conferencing. The year-end book displaying student and sometimes parent writing

artifacts shows a year of the student's growth in language and writing. In fact, Eisner (1991) argued that evaluation did not necessarily require the use of tests (p. 80).

Evaluation concerns the making of value judgments about the quality of some object, situation, or process. Evaluation practices permeate classrooms because of the ways in which teachers appraise students' comments, their social behavior, and their academic work." Eisner also points out that "evaluation occurs everywhere: when teachers listen to children read, when children hand in what they have written, when students respond to teachers' questions, and so forth. (p. 81)

Eisner is an advocate of frequent formative evaluations, and an advocate of involving the learner as a coevaluator. He cautions that the purpose and effects of testing should be considered carefully because evaluation practices are among the most powerful forces influencing the priorities and climate of schools (Eisner, 1991, p. 81). How the teacher negotiates the demands for testing with a classroom program of reading for students is an important sector to examine.

Questions about TBks in the evaluative dimension. How are formative evaluations conducted for TBks? In light of Eisner's observation that evaluation practices influence the priorities and climate of schools, what effect do formative evaluations have on students' writing behaviors? How are summative evaluations conducted and what effect do summative evaluations have on students? What evaluation concerns are important to learners in the design of TBks, and how can TBks be designed to enhance evaluation opportunities? What systems do teachers employ to monitor student progress in TBk projects? How do teachers communicate student progress to parents? How can TBk performance be reported meaningfully in a standards-based report card?

Participants: A Purposive Sample

I was granted entree for this study in five classrooms of three elementary schools in a rural and an inner city school district. Informed consent was obtained from each participant (see Appendix B). This purposive sample drew teachers who routinely circulated collections of students' writing (or agreed to circulate them) to students' homes for home-reading purposes. During an International Reading Association conference held in 2007, I questioned approximately 24 Northern Utah educators as to whether they knew of any teachers who facilitated anything like TBks. References were made to several home-school literacy activities, but none were described which increased overlap of all three spheres of influence, home, school, and community (peers). Participants for this study consisted of the three teachers with whom I had previously worked to design TBks and two additional teachers who agreed to facilitate TBks in their classrooms. Data from my own classroom were also used.

Mrs. Barber was a second grade teacher in an inner city school. Her student population consisted of 84% Hispanic children, 8% African American, and 8% White. The rural groups consisted of approximately 90% middle class White students with an estimated 10% Hispanic, Asian, and African American. The sample of teachers is shown in the table on the next page. The participating teachers ranged from a first-year teacher to 20+-year veteran teachers. Groups from the 2008-2009 school year provided observational, interview, and artifact data for the study (see Table 3-1 under column 4, bold text). Populations prior to 2008-2009 provided existing data.

Table 3-1

Participant Teachers, Their Student Populations, and Survey and Interview Data

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Participant no.	Pseudonym or participant name	Grade level	Year(s) that yielded data	Number of students	Number of TBks	Year-end student survey	Year-end parent survey	Interview data	School (urban or rural)
1	B. Barber	2	2007-2008	21	5	Y	Y	Y	U
2	F. Draper	2	2007-2008	24	8	Y	Y	Y	R
“	“	2	2008-2009	20				”	“
3	J. Gale	2	2007-2008	22	8	Y	Y	Y	R
“	“	2	2008-2009	23				”	“
4	D. Little	2	2006-2007	23	8		Y	researcher	R
5	E. Stuart ^a	K	2006-2007	32	8		Y	Y	R
“	“	K	2007-2008	44	8		Y	”	“
“	“	K	2008-2009	42				”	“
6	M. Sanchez ^b	-	2008-2009	NA				Y	R

Note. This sample provided data from 251 students over 3 years' time. These groups were all engaged in TBk projects with some latitude for variation in their individual facilitations (i.e., teaching style, number and types of TBks, grade level, and population). I purposely worked to build contrast between inner city and rural students studied. Pseudonyms were used for all teachers and students mentioned in the study except participant #4 who is the researcher. All data were derived from normal daily classroom practices and related TBk activities aligned with state core literacy curriculum guidelines.

^a Each year, Mrs. Stuart's kindergarten included two half-day groups of students.

^b Mrs. Sanchez, a writing specialist and certified teacher not currently teaching, volunteered on a weekly basis in her children's classrooms (see “*Mrs. Sanchez, a Writing Specialist...*” under Finding 4).

Gathering Data

The data to answer the research questions were gathered from four sources: (a) classroom observations, (b) interviews and focus groups, (c) artifacts (TBks and year-end books produced by the students and their parents, and the teacher-developed templates, forms, notes, lesson plans, and materials used to assemble TBks), and (d) survey data from a year-end questionnaire. Ongoing member checks and peer reviews were conducted with the teachers and with selected parents, both face-to-face and by way of e-mail.

Data from Classroom Observations and My Role

The opportunity to routinely spend time in several classrooms during this study allowed me to observe a diversity of teaching strategies for facilitating TBks day in and day out. New data were gathered, reduced, and analyzed continuously throughout the study. This approach approximated a method of “constant comparison” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 621) to identify categories and to create sharp distinctions between categories. This approach included frequent reviews or quick check-ups with the participants. The results of a first analysis were often reanalyzed in context with new data as it emerged.

According to Gall and colleagues (2003), participant observation is a primary method for qualitative research. The observer role varies along a continuum from complete observer to complete participant. Between these two extremes are the observer-participant role (less active) and participant-observer role (more active; Gall et al., 2003).

In this study, I was in the role of participant observer, interacting with individuals enough to establish a meaningful identity within their respective groups, but refraining from interfering with activities at the core of each group's identity. I set aside time in the evenings to record classroom observations from the day and to reflect on them while the observations were fresh in my mind. Eisner argues that the researcher's voice should be evident in written accounts of observations in order to serve epistemological interests (Eisner, 1991, p. 4). Through observing and writing, my appreciation increased for the diversity in teachers' pedagogical rationales, teaching styles, and purposes for facilitating TBks (Eisner, 1991). As Eisner's methodology advises, I have tried to keep a sense of voice present in my writing. Existing data from my own classroom were also used, as indicated earlier in Table 3-1.

Interviews and Focus Groups

The research questions were written to explore the TBk experiences of teachers, parents, and students. I interviewed four former students in two settings, and spoke at length with three parents by telephone. Two additional interviews shown in the table were not audiotaped but were noted in my journal immediately afterward on the same day. I planned to conduct audiotaped focus groups in three sessions. Only two participants attended each focus group, which resulted in "focused conversations." However, they are referred to as focus groups for this study. Mrs. McGregor, a nonparticipating teacher (pseudonym used) who was interested in learning about TBks participated with Mrs. Stuart and me in one group. Her interest in the topic provided Mrs. Stuart with increased purpose for explaining her TBk experiences (see *Mrs. Stuart's*

Kindergarten TBk Project in Chapter IV, Finding 4.

Gathering data from unexpected sources to help answer the research questions is consistent with Eisner's (1995) approach to qualitative inquiry. Unplanned encounters with a former student of Mrs. Draper's and a former student from one of my earlier classes resulted in dialogue which I logged in my journal and which resulted in one additional scheduled interview (see Mimi's story and Dusty's story in Chapter IV under *Stories from the Study*). In all, I interviewed 15 people with the aim to explore TBk experience from the perspectives of teachers, parents, and students. Participating teachers were invited to member-check and thus contribute to my interpretations of their responses. The parents of Lori and Rachelle, both students whose vignettes I used to represent findings, were invited to contribute additional information about their experience with TBks. Table 3-2 shows interviews conducted, and Table 3-3 shows focus groups conducted (see Appendix E for the interview protocol).

Table 3-2

Interviews Conducted

Position	Interviewees' pseudonyms	Date	Setting or location	Method
Teacher	Mrs. Sanchez	09/10/2008	A restaurant	Audio taped
Teacher	Mrs. Barber	01//2009	Mrs. Barber's classroom	Written immediately afterward
Former student	Mimi	09/23/ and 10//2008	School playground and a shopping center	Written immediately afterward
Parent	Mrs. Johnson	12/08/2008	Telephone interview	Audio taped
Parent	Mr. Kirk	12/08/2008	Telephone interview	Audio taped
Parent	Mrs. Taylor	12/18/2008	Telephone interview	Audio taped

Table 3-3

Focus Groups or “Focused Conversations” Conducted with Two to Three Participants

Position	Participants’ pseudonyms	Date	Setting or location	Method
Teachers	Mrs. Stuart & Ms. McGregor	09/08/2009	Kindergarten rm. after school	Audio taped
Teachers	Mrs. Draper & Mrs. Gale	09/10/2008	My home	Audio taped
Former student	Dusty and his wife Janette	09/25/2008	University cafeteria	Audio taped
Former students	Siblings ages 10, 12, 15	02/ /2009	Conference room, principal present	Audio taped

The point of the interviews and focus groups was to learn how the participants experienced TBks. Most transcripts of these conversations yielded rich data to help answer the research questions.

Artifact Data

Artifacts included teachers’ files, students’ writing in all stages of the writing process, TBks, and year-end books. First, the teachers’ files represented a repertoire of digital and hard copy notes, lesson plans, and documents collected or created by teachers and passed from one year to the next. Second, samples of students’ work done immediately following classroom instruction reflected the effects of the instruction on student engagement in writing. Third, TBks provided a running record of students’ writing progress. Finally, the year-end book for each child provided a volume of the student’s writing throughout the year together with small samples of classmates’ work for the recipient to keep.

Survey Data

The teachers designed a simple survey to learn how parents had experienced TBks at home. With a 65% return of the surveys overall, and with pre-coding to identify each responder, the survey results did give a feel for how a wide range of parents experienced TBks. In addition to parents' surveys, during the study the students in three groups completed a students' survey at school. A summary of survey results and the effects of variables among groups are summarized in Chapter IV under *Finding 6* (see Appendices D and F for a detailed analysis of the surveys).

Instruments and Measures

Two instruments were designed with the help of the participating teachers and used to gather data for this study—a year-end survey for parents and a year-end survey for students. The parents' surveys varied slightly from group to group according to the titles and activities particular to each group. All the surveys included both qualitative and quantitative questions. All surveys included seven questions to be answered on a Likert scale which I designed utilizing the dimensions of Eisner's methodological framework as a guide. In addition, I designed protocols for semi-structured interviews and focus groups (see Appendices C and D).

My Step-by-Step Process to Arrive at a Finding

The framed text in the following sections explains my analysis of one research finding as an example of methodological steps used in analysis of findings of this study.

The Analysis: My journey to arrive at one finding

The various findings of this study included a particular conclusion: ***“Recognizing and addressing students as authors changed students’ views about themselves and caused their writing behaviors to change.”*** In the sections which follow I will illustrate, step-by-step, how I arrived at this specific finding. “My journey” will continue from section to section in framed text.

Process of Analysis

Boundaries among the traditions of qualitative inquiry tend to overlap, yet different paradigms differ in form, terms, and focus (Creswell, 1998). For instance, educational criticism (Eisner, 1991) is the methodological approach I used for this study. Educational criticism shares commonalities with other traditions of qualitative inquiry such as ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology. However, the distinct characteristics of educational criticism are specific to *education*, emphasizing and defining educational practice as lived experience.

As I gathered data from four main sources (interview, survey, artifact, and classroom observation), I began the ongoing process of reducing the data by reading, coding, and making memos in the margins. An overview of my approach to this process looks similar to Creswell’s approach to analyzing a phenomenology study (Creswell, 1998, p. 55), as follows.

1. Divide the original protocols into statements.
2. Transform them into clusters of meanings expressed in psychological [and educational criticism] concepts.

3. Utilize the dimensions of Eisner's Educational Criticism framework (1991) to organize clusters of meanings for the distillation process.

4. Finally, tie these transformations together to make a general description of the experience, recognizing *what* was experienced and perceiving *how* it was experienced.

Guided by Deweyan philosophy, Eisner (1999) used the terminology, "recognizing" *what transpired* (i.e., the result), and "perceiving" *how it transpired and was experienced* (i.e., the process). In harmony with Eisner's methodology, Creswell describes the steps of data analysis as cyclic in nature (pp. 142-148). Accordingly, my experience during this educational research analysis was that of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach.

My steps to analyze this study included: (a) data managing, (b) reading and memo writing, (c) describing, (d) classifying, (e) interpreting, and (f) representing and visualizing. The first loop in the spiral begins with data managing.

Data Managing

First, in preparation for large amounts of data from multiple perspectives and sources, a filing system was organized on my computer's hard drive for transcribing audiotaped interviews, storing digital artifacts and photos according to the dimensions of Eisner's (1991) methodological framework, and for my daily log. Then I organized physical files and shelf space in my home office to sort and hold respondents' survey forms and artifacts such as TBks and documents from teachers' files. At this point, the recognizable thoughts presented in the data were sorted into the Educational Criticism framework categories: intentional, structural, curricular, pedagogical, evaluative, and into

categories under “survey results” and “computer-based development,” using an initial coding system to relocate the original data when needed.

The Analysis: My journey... (Step 1: data managing)

As I was transcribing Mrs. Sanchez’ interview I paused to highlight her comments regarding “**addressing students as authors.**” That theme was placed on my “Themes” list.

Reading and Memo Writing

This second stage of the analysis includes reading over the data. This process brought to mind more complex themes such as concerns with IHW, SREs, PI, Input forms, peer involvement, teachers’ facilitations, teachers’ challenges, classroom instruction, rubrics, and parents’ challenges. For each emerging theme I watched for corroborating or contrasting evidence. Tasks in this stage of the analysis included the following.

- 1 *Interviews* were transcribed. Comments specific to a theme were color-coded.
- 2 *Observation* notes, reflective, and reflexive journal entries were tagged by topic.
- 3 *Artifacts* were available for reference.
- 4 *Quantitative survey questions* were tallied, summed, averaged and changed to percentages for each group and for all groups where appropriate.
- 5 *Qualitative survey questions* were recorded and grouped by topic, which further defined the emergent themes. The primary data were tagged and filed. Thus, in the primary file, each respondent’s total responses were kept intact and each group was

kept intact.

6 *An Excel spreadsheet* listed data sources on the Y axis and categories on the X axis as a checklist to keep the sources and goals of the study in focus without leaving out important data.

The Analysis: My journey... (Step 2: reading and memo writing)

While reading over the data I came across and tagged another of Mrs. Sanchez' remarks from my observation notes: "**Good morning, authors! Welcome**" (January 13, 2009).

Some of the participating teachers practiced addressing students as authors, but prior to this point I had made note of only one piece of data that pertained to **addressing students as authors**. I searched for data from other sources.

I noticed artifacts of TBk covers which referred to the importance of students seeing themselves as authors. I also compared data from classes where students had been addressed as authors with data from classes where students had not been addressed as authors.

When a theme-oriented item was located, I added it to the master list on my computer and color-coded the related data within journal comments and survey results. I also tagged journal notes, put a sticky note on related artifact data, and wrote notes. This step of the analysis involved reading, reflecting, reducing data, and writing notes or memos in margins and across questions, and finally dividing the original protocols into statements (Creswell, 1998, p. 143) which could be carried into the third step of analysis.

Describing

The third step of the analysis was to describe and make meaning from the original data. Thus, the initial statements were transformed into clusters of meanings (Creswell, 1998) to be analyzed in context with Eisner's (1991) methodological framework. A

combination of inductive and deductive thinking was employed.

The process of writing a description helped to appraise and analyze what was being described. For example, by attempting to divide the original protocols into statements I discovered a need to identify varying types of TBks by the amount of PI invested in each. This dilemma led the study to revisit previous steps of the analysis in a cyclic pattern as described above.

Interactive home writing (IHW): A study within a study. Not all TBks were created equal. The first survey question asked parents which TBk titles their child favored. If responses to this question were to be meaningful, the general concept of a TBk would need to be appraised and transformed according to the amount of effort parents had invested in each book. A way to group TBks was recognized, and TBks were divided into categories as follows: (1) TBks authored entirely in class with the aid of teacher's scaffolding and peer mentoring throughout the writing process, (2) TBks authored partly in class with input from parents, and (3) TBks authored collaboratively by parent and child at home (IHW), which required a greater amount of effort on the parents' part. In addition, parents were expected to engage their child in a SRE at home using TBks of all three levels. Table 3-4 illustrates the criteria used for grouping TBks by the amount of parent involvement (PI) invested in each.

The survey forms did not indicate the level of PI for each title. Parents were asked to rank their child's favorite three titles. In the analysis, the teachers used the terms "simple," "moderate," and "complex" to describe the level of PI invested in each type. The type of PI that I considered for the grouping of TBks was Epstein's (1995) Type 4

Table 3-4

Grouping of Traveling Books According to Amount of Parent Involvement (PI)

Parent involvement	Criteria	Preferred time frame	Titles
Simple PI	Authored entirely in class SRE at home	Sept. to Nov.	Johnny Appleseed stories Traveling to where the wild things are There's something under the stairs Interview with a classmate Year-end book
Moderate PI	10-20 minutes of authoring at home and Sre at home	Oct. and Feb.	Fred E. Frog's journal (or Ted E. Bear's journal) Memories (note from input form) Other TBks using the input form
Complex PI	IHW titles authored completely at home, and SRE at home	Sept., Nov., and Jan.	Pets in our lives Our baby stories Our family adventure stories

PI, learning at home. It should be remembered that I coded only the assumed effort required for the Type 4 involvement without knowledge of the *quality* of the time spent. We sent home a rubric for IHW asking parents to write a family-based story collaboratively with their child. We had incorporated some of the thinking in IHW which was learned from other successful home-school interactive literacy practices (e.g., Epstein and colleagues' [2001] "TIPS" model; Burningham & Dever's [2005] "literacy bags").

The participating teachers were not sure how the parents had experienced a PI activity as complex as IHW. Many of the students could not write fluently and some parents could not write fluently, at least not in English. One of my partner teachers asked if we had "pushed the envelope" by asking parents to do a teacher's job. However, all of the rural parents responded to the rubric, including an occasional "nonresponding" parent

who accepted the teacher's assistance to complete the assignment. How did parents feel about IHW rubrics? How did parents feel about receiving support from a teacher if needed? If parents felt all right about IHW, then we wanted to know how many home writing assignments we could expect them to feel all right about. There were other questions as well, since we knew of no other teachers who had designed procedures asking parents to write family stories collaboratively with their child.

Stories to describe findings. Eisner (1991) argued that observational data may be reduced, communicated, and described most effectively through stories (p. 15). He claimed that qualitative studies of classrooms, teachers, and schools are usually expressed in stories, arguing, "This [study of TBk projects] is a task of storytelling, and in the telling of any story, theme, plot, and point are central considerations" (p. 189). Common patterns which emerged from the data were described through stories. Seven vignettes describe the complex and subtle qualities of TBk phenomena and its effect on struggling, average, and gifted writers, and on behaviorally handicapped students, and retrospectively on former students.

The Analysis: My journey... (Step 3: describing)

Did I have enough data to write a description for "**Addressing students as authors?**" I was among those teachers who routinely addressed students as authors, so I had to search beyond my own practice and predisposition to find how others perceived the effects of addressing students as authors and its results.

I wrote descriptions of what I saw happening in other teachers' classrooms when students were addressed as authors and contrasted those descriptions with what went on during writing instruction in participating classrooms where students were not addressed as authors. I asked other teachers what they thought about this practice. They each had their own style, but those who had watched Mrs. Sanchez' teaching admired the genuine way she spoke with students as one author speaks to another.

Classifying

The fourth step of the analysis showed elements beginning to merge into a more holistic conception of TBks, a process that helped with classifying those elements. For example, small elements had an increased effect on students' learning when facilitated in a timely manner in context with other elements (e.g., struggling authors could lose momentum in writing unless the students had seen how a peer author could perform a finished piece of work at *Author's Chair*). The elements of a peer authoring community seemed to work best in a sequential flow of events.

As stated previously, Eisner's method used the philosophical guidance of Deweyan educational theory (Creswell, 1998, p. 81) for distilling meaning and applying classification. This process was one of observational exploration beyond recognizing *what* transpired to investigating "*how*" things transpired, which Dewey called "perception" (1935, as cited in Eisner, 1991, p. 7). Themes and topics were evaluated against the criteria established for this study to determine which were essential and which were not, and to determine how to classify each. For example, could a SRE at home be classified as an *essential element* of TBks? How would "addressing students as authors" be classified? What was the criterion to identify an essential element?

During classroom observations, I had watched various strategies enacted by different teachers that could lead to a similar outcome. If the desired result could be attained through any of a number of strategies, then the separate strategies were analyzed more carefully to locate the *common event* in each that triggered the same desired result. *That* event was recognized as the essential element.

The Analysis: My journey... (Step 4: classifying)

“Recognizing and addressing students as authors” was classified as a function of the pedagogical dimension because giving this type of recognition is chiefly performed and promoted by teachers. However, I wondered, is this event to be classified as an essential element in a TBk model? Had other strategies been equally effective in causing students to behave like authors? I reviewed the research question and then examined the major data:

1. *Artifacts* - A message was laminated on the front cover of the TBks addressed to parents: “*It is important that children view themselves as authors. Please enjoy this book together as a Shared Reading Experience.*” Mrs. Stuart had continued this practice for over two decades, reporting benefits for students as a result.
2. *Interview. (September 10, 2008)* - Mrs. Sanchez, a teacher/writing specialist described [with animation] the student’s perspective: “...it’s the whole idea of letting these kids have the freedom to ... make the paradigm shift of “I’m not just a reader. I’m actually an Author. So that changes how I, when I pick up a book, I’m... looking at it from an author’s perspective. Like, ‘*How did they structure these sentences?*’ And ‘*How did they put this together?*’ And so I’ve engaged a lot more of my brain than just reading the words. Because I’ve engaged a lot more of my brain, I can internalize that, turn around, and *use* it as a *tool* to help me later on, like, ‘*Now, how did I do that?*’ Or ‘*How can I do that?*’ These ideas can come back in force, because *I* have gathered them as ideas.”
3. *Interview. (September 23, 2008)* - Mimi, a former student of Mrs. Draper: “Mrs. Little! Mrs. Little!” she [Mimi] shouted [from across the playground], “I’m an author!” (See *Mimi’s Story*, p. 148)
4. My pilot study included a conversation among a group of second grade teachers unfamiliar with addressing students as authors. One teacher expressed, “It is a chore to get second graders to write anything at all, let alone *re-write* it with any kind of success.” The other teachers agreed, making various similar comments.
5. *Classroom observation. (January 16, 2009)* - I wrote in my reflexive journal, “After we finished reading and discussing why the students thought that author Amy Hest (1997) had written “*When Jessie Came across the Sea*” [I had addressed the students as authors and had mentored an author’s role], I observed students at many skill levels assuming an author’s perspective. Knowing that they were now defined as authors made observable differences in their writing behaviors. They worked hard to gain credibility with peers especially at Author’s Chair.

No conflicting data was found. No alternative strategies could be found to cause students to behave like authors. I classified “addressing students as authors” as an essential element of the TBk model in the pedagogical dimension.

Interpreting

Step five connects the previous transformations to make a general description of the TBk experience. The interpretation of results includes a cyclic process of distillation which can be better understood if findings can be linked to and compared or contrasted with existing research and theory to increase understanding of how small data points can fit into the larger picture.

The Analysis: My journey... (Step 5: Interpreting)

I discovered four theoretical views from the literature to help explain the finding, ***“Recognizing and addressing students as authors changed students’ views about themselves and caused their writing behaviors to change.”*** The theoretical views are:

1. Johnston (2004) argued, “...The way a teacher talks can position students differently in relation to what they are doing, learning, or studying.... Although language operates within relationships, language practices also influence relationships among people and, consequently, the ways they think about themselves and each other (p. 9). Eisner further explained (1991, p 2) that “what teachers and students do is influenced by their location [and recognition of their location] in a system.” The study found that teachers could “position” students as authors essentially by recognizing them as authors.
2. Eisner (1999) claimed that “Knowledge is made, not simply discovered. In other words, human knowledge is a constructed form of experience...” Creswell (1998) suggested that a brief history, context, and variants introduce [the] procedures involved in conducting, [interpreting, and appraising] findings of a study (p. 47).
3. Graves (1994) described observable effects on students’ behavior when teachers address them as authors, including during their performances at Author’s Chair.
4. Epstein (referring to school, home, and community) claimed that “[People] may remember how a teacher paid individual attention to them, recognized their uniqueness, or praised them for real progress....and supported their work as a student [or author]....[They may remember] activities that made them feel smart or good about themselves and their families (1995).

The integrity of the finding was substantiated by these theoretical views. No theory or evidence could be found to refute this finding, and no alternative practices could be found that equaled this finding for causing students to emulate the behavior of authors. Thus, findings of this study could be transformed into knowledge through interpretation.

Representing and Visualizing

Step six: In Eisner's (1991) terms of educational criticism, a "*connoisseur*" has expertise to classify and interpret. Further, the educational *critic* is capable of communicating the complex and subtle qualities observed in a manner to do justice to what was perceived (p. 3).

The Analysis: My journey... (Step 6: Representing and Visualizing)

I used narrative, models, and seven vignettes to communicate the complex and subtle qualities and the effects of **"Recognizing and addressing students as authors."**

However, this finding is not commonly seen in classroom practice. Future effort is needed to invite dialogue and further exploration of this finding. Internet development may be a large part of that effort to help teachers visualize and implement TBks as part of their school's literacy programs.

All other findings of the study were arrived at by following the foregoing steps.

In summary, I gathered and organized the data and described TBk environments and what transpired in those environments from the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. I used Eisner's (1991) educational criticism framework to organize the descriptions. Experiences were described and transformed into clusters of meaning. In the final steps of the analysis, these clusters of meaning were tied together to illuminate the holistic nature of TBks and to identify the "soul" or the essential elements which were found to trigger desirable learning processes, or in other words, to trigger processes of learning which resulted in academic and affective benefits (Bransford et al., 2001) from the perspectives of the students, parents, and teachers.

Preconceived Ideas

The point of this study was not to seek “validation” for TBks as I had experienced them, but to go with an open mind to seek understanding, and to find answers to the research questions, which might prove useful to a variety of teachers and teaching methods in many localities. Part of this process included identifying weaknesses in TBk facilitations. The aim was to better understand the learning needs of students and the needs of families and teachers. My bias is bracketed by the purpose and methodology of this study and should not present a problem to the trustworthiness of its findings (see *Bracketing Interview* in Appendix I).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of a student/parent/peer authoring community called Traveling Books (TBks) to better understand the essential elements and dynamics of this instructional model. The research questions were as follows.

1. What are the essential elements (inputs) that trigger desirable learning processes to occur in a TBk project, as experienced by kindergarten and second grade level students, parents, and teachers?
2. What theory supports teachers involving parents in TBk projects, and how can computer-based technology become part of that approach?

This chapter discusses the findings that led to my conclusions. Seven detailed vignettes are used to describe complex and subtle qualities of TBk environments pertaining to a variety of circumstances.

Overview and Advanced Organizer for this Chapter

What I found was that TBks nurtured reciprocal energy for authoring among students, parents, and peers. TBks were based on assumptions of parent responsibility and student capability. These assumptions affected the way teachers managed their partnerships with “a parent figure for every student.” Almost all parents participated with their child in SREs at home and contributed family knowledge to specific TBks. In effect, the TBks provided access for parents to contribute to their child’s peer-based literacy instruction, thus enhancing their mentoring roles. At school, teachers positioned students

as authors by addressing them as authors. Struggling authors received scaffolding to succeed in this foreign role from the standpoint of their own thought processes, as no child was left out of a TBk experience. The facilitation of TBks resulted in students' increased writing behaviors and students seeking the skills needed to write. Findings substantiated the teachers' assumption that parents and teachers as partners are primarily responsible for children's literacy learning and confirmed benefits of Epstein's theory for increasing overlap of school, family, and community to influence children's learning.

Advanced Organizer

Finding 1: Intent and definition of TBks. Data from this study helped to clarify the theory and intent, which supports four main aspects of TBks: (a) processes and roles, (b) essential elements, (c) philosophical principles, and (d) future developments. A definition and overview of study results distilled within this finding (go to p 70).

Finding 2: Structure of a TBk project. The essence of findings was that it was essential to circulate TBks to students' homes and to conduct an hour per week of writing instruction. All other events were orchestrated around these core events.

Finding 3: Curriculum for TBks. Students and parents "owned" the language they used to contribute one-page family stories and smaller pieces of family knowledge to TBks. The project was guided by the schools' literacy program and writing instruction.

Finding 4: Pedagogy for students, parents, and peers. A teacher's respect for parents' values and mentoring roles at home was crucial to TBk effectiveness. Teachers cultivated student/parent/peer authoring communities by (a) explicitly enjoying and discussing children's literature from an author's perspective, (b) recognizing and

addressing students as authors, and (c) providing guidance and support for parents through TBks. Teachers managed their partnerships by involving “a parent figure for every student” through TBks.

Finding 5: Evaluative procedures. This study discovered that when TBks were circulated to homes, parents could see much more than a standardized score or a numeric assessment of their child’s progress. In the survey, the majority of parents indicated appreciation for the opportunity to evaluate their child’s work in context with the works of peers.

Finding 6: Survey results. We learned from the survey that a few parents experienced struggles with the IHW activity. Nevertheless, TBks that resulted from IHW were among the most highly favored of all TBks. The surveys provided helpful insights for teachers to improve TBk pedagogy as well as the IHW activity.

Finding 7: Need for internet-assisted development. Study results included the need to develop Internet-assisted TBk training to work toward preserving and improving this research-based TBk experience which students, parents, and teachers perceived as valuable.

Stories from the Study

Effects that TBks had on struggling, handicapped, average, and gifted readers were described and illustrated through vignettes of individual students. The stories also described how teachers worked with nonresponding parents.

Assumptions and Ideology Behind Traveling Books

The assumption that parents carry responsibility for their children's literacy learning affected the teachers' view of their own responsibility to provide guidance.

Practical Significance of Findings

A qualified teacher could set up TBk facilitation without understanding the details of this study. The teacher could observe what a TBk looked like, set aside an hour per week of instructional time to teach the writing process, and circulate a new TBk to students' homes approximately once a month. Understanding of the theory and findings of this study would be likely to increase from personal experience while practicing TBks throughout a school year, but collaborations with other teachers and the research findings of this study do include solutions to some of the problems the teacher would be likely to encounter.

Conclusion of Chapter IV

This summary of the chapter includes the essence, or "soul" of TBks and the effects of TBks on students. This section provides a brief synopsis of all the findings. The chapter contains seven findings, seven stories, and two discussion sections.

Finding 1: Intent and Definition of Traveling Books

This finding begins with a definition of TBks and then presents an overview of all findings. Twelve essential elements are listed within Eisner's (1991) framework of five dimensions of schooling. A discussion with accompanying figures illustrates how those

elements fit together in a process of reciprocity among students, parents, and peers. A hierarchal organization is suggested for development of internet-assisted TBk training for teachers and parents.

Definition

TBks are a vehicle for publishing and circulating student-authored stories approximately once a month to the homes of students for SREs. A TBk included the best writing of each student. Struggling authors received scaffolding if needed by teachers and parents. Occasionally a TBk was made up of a compilation of family-based stories written collaboratively by each parent and child at home. In this study, teachers used the TBks to publish and circulate the written work of kindergarten and second grade student “authors” and their peers. One hour per week of class instructional time was set aside to conduct writing instruction and TBk facilitation as a normal part of the school’s literacy program. TBk content, facilitation, and effects TBks had on learners will be described in detail in the findings of this study.

From time to time, family knowledge, preformatted for TBks, was contributed by parents for inclusion in particular TBks. TBks containing family knowledge were among students’ preferred titles. A TBk would fit inside a large envelope with the words on front, *“It is important that children view themselves as authors. Please enjoy this book together as a Shared Reading Experience.”* TBks were circulated to the homes of students, and at the end of the year were taken apart and each child’s stories compiled into a year-end book for that child to keep.

The participating teachers found that TBks could increase “literacy mileage” for

their existing writing instruction. For example, instead of displaying students' written work on a traditional bulletin board where a student might receive two or three exposures to the text, the teacher could bind the written work together with the work of peers into a TBk. A TBk provided the child with the following text exposures in the presence of an audience: (a) performing his or her own work at Author's Chair for peers, (b) sharing the work in an SRE at home, (c) revisiting the work in the class reading corner with peers [many times], and (d) re-reading the work in the year-end book at home. Having had his or her audience in mind beforehand gave the child more purpose for transforming meaningful thoughts into words and sentences throughout the steps of the writing process and for stretching to learn the conventions to write.

According to Epstein's framework for six major types of parent involvement, TBks were considered a Type 4 parent involvement, "learning at home." Parents counted the occasional "SRE" as part of their child's daily home reading. Some parents commented:

- It's nice to compare my child's work with others.
- It was a great way for me to assess my child with classmates.
- It was neat to see her so excited about her own work as well as her classmate's work.
- I felt that the traveling books were fun.

The term, "student/parent/peer authoring community" seemed appropriate to describe second grade TBk pedagogy because home, school, and community each contributed activities and content toward TBks. As a result, social reciprocal energy for learning was augmented among the spheres (see Rachelle's Story in *Stories from the Study*). Findings for this study were derived mostly from second-grade data, where TBks

were categorized as three types according to the estimated amount of parents' time invested in each. The TBks were categorized for the purpose of making meaning from parents' responses to a survey question that asked which TBk titles their child preferred (see Table 3-4). TBks types were as follows.

- *Simple PI*: TBks authored entirely in class with teachers' scaffolding and peer mentoring throughout the writing process
- *Moderate PI*: TBks authored partly in class which included pre-formatted family knowledge [about the student] from parents
- *Complex PI*: TBks authored collaboratively by parent and child at home (using an IHW rubric), which required a greater amount of effort on the parents' part.

In addition to the amounts of PI described above, approximately once a month the parents were expected to engage their child in a SRE at home using a TBk.

Advocating Existing Theory

Epstein's (1995) model for increasing overlap of children's spheres of influence, home, school, and community can be adapted to illustrate the structure of a TBk environment (see Figure 4-1). Underlying Epstein's (1995) model was a theory of how social organizations connect: specifically, Epstein's theory of how school, family, and community connect to influence children's learning. The core value was caring. Epstein assumes that, if children feel cared for and encouraged from the spheres that influence them most (home, school, and community) to work hard in the role of student, they are more likely to do their best to learn to read, write, calculate, and learn other skills and talents and to remain in school (Epstein, 1995). Figure 4-1 illustrates the processes and reciprocal roles in a TBk environment. The figure depicts students functioning at the

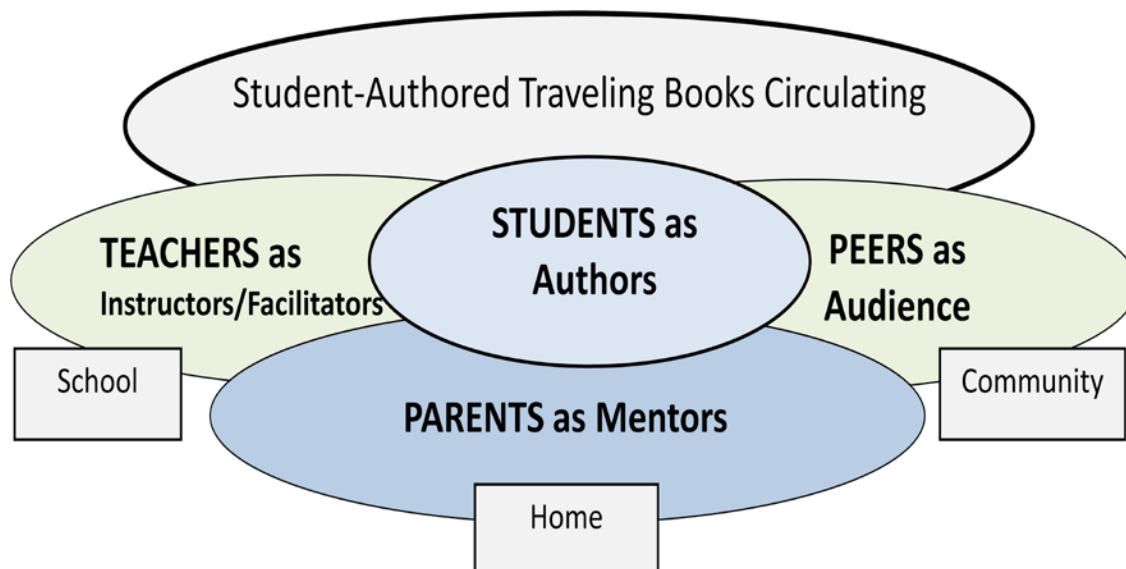


Figure 4-1. Interactive processes and roles in traveling books.

center of the environment as *authors*. Teachers are shown as instructors, parents as mentors, and peers as audience [having specific tasks in the authoring community].

Figure 4-2 gives an idea of how TBk events transpired among the matrix shown in Figure 4-1. For example, each activity in Figure 4-2 originated in one of the spheres and flowed to the other spheres through the interactive nature and processes of the environment, which will be discussed. The values listed in callouts under each heading are based on respect (Shockley et al., 1995). Activities shown in Figure 4-2 were aimed at improving students' morale, motivation, and academic achievement without becoming burdensome or over-taxing on any one set of stakeholders. As a result, social reciprocal energy increased and relationships strengthened among teachers, parents, students, and peers (see *Rachelle's Story* under *Stories from the Study*, for example).

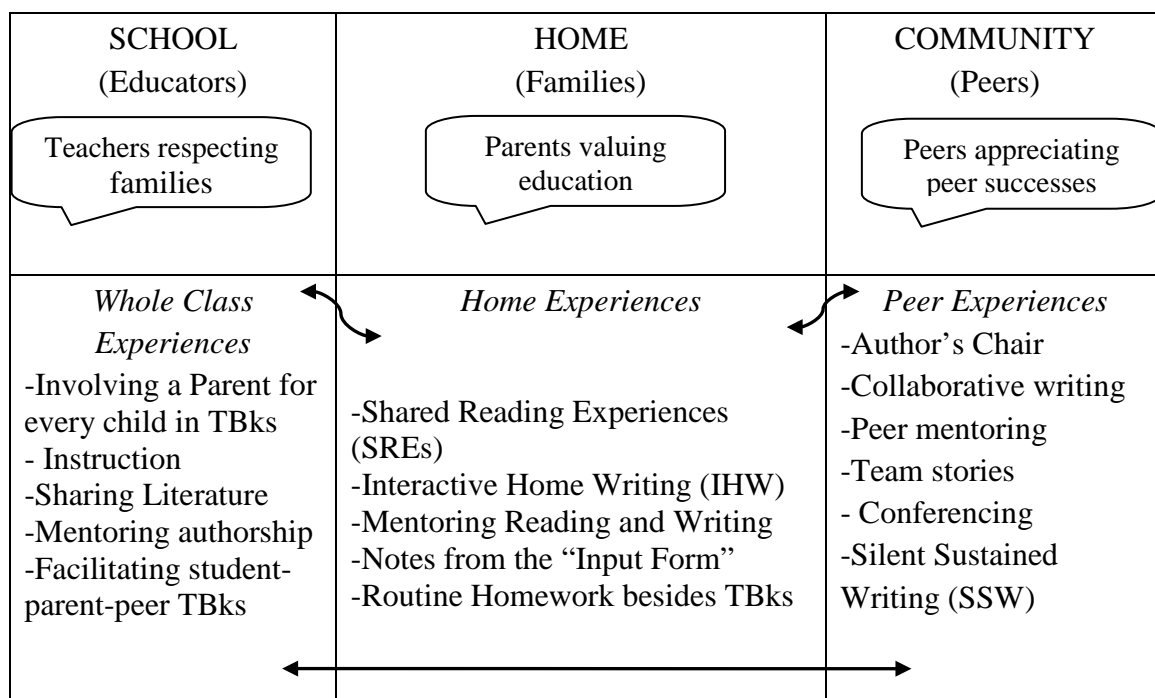


Figure 4-2. Origins of interactive experiences in traveling book projects.

Conditions in TBk environments that brought about the phenomena of reciprocal energy for learning began primarily with the teacher and escalated in the following ways: first, teachers provided simple opportunities for families to interact with what was going on in the classroom. The level of respect teachers demonstrated in communications such as IHW rubrics and follow-up notices (making a judgment from differences among classroom facilitations) affected how parents responded, and subsequently how students felt about working hard in school. Second, increased respect between home and school resulted in motivated students who energized and guided their peers (see *Rachelle’s Story* under *Stories from the Study*). Third, students’ writing behaviors increased. This reciprocity motivated and energized the participant teachers to continue and improve TBk pedagogy year after year. The teachers’ goal to engage every parent through TBks led

the teachers to collaboratively design their strategies for following up with non-responding parents (see Jon's story and Clayton's story under *Stories from the Study*).

Theory to support parents as partners. The second research question begins, "What theory supports teachers involving parents in TBk projects?" Keeping in mind that TBks are based on Epstein's (1995) theory for increasing overlap of the spheres of influence, TBks advocated existing theory in the areas of human development (Hart & Risley, 1995), parent partnering (Shockley et al., 1995; Trumbull et al., 2001) and other theories as described in the review of literature. TBk pedagogy is further constructed from three learning theories: (a) social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), (b) theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978), and (c) principles for cultivating communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002). These theories are summarized below.

Bandura (1977). Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. Social reciprocal energy is positive reciprocity between individuals as they interact socially, each lending to the other impetus for increased depth in the interaction.

Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky's ZPD is "the distance between actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Developing this concept allowed Vygotsky to examine "those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state" (p. 86).

Wenger et al. (2002). “The goal of community design is to bring out the community’s own internal direction, character, and energy” (p. 51). From our experience we have derived seven principles: (a) design for evolution, (b) open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives, (c) invite different levels of participation, (d) develop both public and private community spaces, (e) focus on value, (f) combine familiarity and excitement, (g) create a rhythm for the community (2002).

Practitioners and theory. Prior to facilitating TBks, most of the participating teachers were not fully versed in the details of learning theory. The second grade teachers followed the example set by Mrs. Stuart, a knowledgeable kindergarten teacher who did apparently understand much theory. We combined Mrs. Stuart’s procedures with strategies employed by Mrs. Sanchez when she assisted with writing in the second grade classrooms. I took notes and wrote scripted TBk lesson plans to reflect strategies we learned from Mrs. Stuart and Mrs. Sanchez (see Lesson Plans in Appendix G), which preserved a “recognition level” example of what had worked.

Essential Elements of Traveling Books

In answer to the first research question, the *essential elements* of TBks were sorted and categorized from a huge repertoire of data gathered from the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers in four source types (interviews, surveys, classroom observations, and artifacts), and distilled and analyzed through the dimensions of Eisner’s (1991) educational criticism framework. The resulting essential elements for TBk pedagogy are shown below in five pillars to depict the key dimension in which each essential element functioned. However, dashed lines on the pillars denote that each

essential element affects the elements in the other dimensions (see Figure 4-3). Each essential element is described in detail in the remainder of findings of this study.

Assumptions of Traveling Book Ideology

A paradigm which grew out of this study began with the assumption that parents and teachers were both responsible for elementary age children's literacy learning. This assumption affected the way the participating teachers discussed parents' roles and thus the way teachers began to perceive opportunities to work together with parents. Teachers searched for systematic methods of parent communications and follow-up procedures to involve non-responding parents. The teachers developed a communications system patterned after the attributes of parallel practices (Shockley et al., 1995) and consequently employed 100% parent participation in TBks (see Figures 4-11 to 4-20 shown later in this chapter for examples of communications and follow-up notices).

Essential Elements				
INTENTIONAL	STRUCTURAL	CURRICULAR	PEDAGOGICAL	EVALUATIVE
Increasing Overlap of the child's Spheres of Influence: Home, School, & Community through Interactive Literacy	Student- Authored Traveling Books Circulating to Students' Homes for Shared Reading Experiences (SREs)	Child's prior experiences from home The School's Literacy Program Instruction for the Writing Process	Addressing Students as Authors Enjoying Literature Guiding Students, Parents & Peers through TBks	Individual Conferencing Author's Chair TBks as Assessment Instruments Year-End Book for each child

Figure 4-3. Twelve essential elements in Eisner's (1995) five dimensions of schooling.

Similarly, the phenomena resulting from teachers' instructional language where a teacher recognized and addressed students as authors resulted in students' increased participation and in observable changes in students' conceptions of writing. These social phenomena reciprocated from the parents and students back to the teacher, enhancing the teacher's ability to influence learners.

At several points during this study, I questioned whether my observations of the effects of TBks were too idealistic. Johnston (2004) reminded us that if we have learned anything from Vygotsky (1978) it is that children grow into the intellectual life around them. Johnston noticed, "accomplished teachers used subtle ways to build emotionally and relationally healthy learning communities—intellectual environments that produced not mere technical competence, but caring, secure, actively literate human beings" (p. 2). He cited Mary Rose O'Reilley who wrote some years ago, "I had gone off to be a teacher, asking myself from time to time if it might be possible to teach English in such a way that people would stop killing each other" (O'Reilley 1993, as cited in Johnston, 2004, p. 3). Johnston was reminded of his own journey into teaching when he had filed his goals under youthful idealism for studying teachers' use of influential language. However, in his later work while studying the behavior of effective teachers Johnston realized he had been wrong. He argues, "It is both realistic and fundamental" to use the "language of influence" in teaching (Johnston, 2004, pp. 1, 3). Accordingly, Johnston found that the ways in which teachers worded their communications tended to "position" students [and parents] in relation to what the students [and parents] were doing (p. 9). Thus, a pattern began to emerge from the teachers' perspectives which indicated that the

teachers' assumptions about the learners and parents did affect the teachers' ability to empower students as self-motivated learners and parents as capable in parenting. Bandura (1986) referred to these phenomena as "reciprocal energy for learning." The distillations of this study repeatedly verified the five statements to explain TBk ideology below (see *Stories from the Study*):

1. *Parents and teachers* as partners are responsible for children's literacy learning.
2. *Teachers'* roles include involving a parent for every child and providing a vehicle (TBks) for the parents to take part in an aspect of their children's school literacy instruction.
3. *Students* whose thinking can be made visible are recognized and addressed as authors.
4. *Peers* (as mentors and audience) lend purpose & motivation to what a child can and will write.
5. *TBks* are a vehicle for increasing overlap of the child's spheres of influence, home, school, and community (see Figure 4-4).

Internet-Assisted Training for Teachers and Parents

The second research question asks how computer-based technology can become part of teachers involving parents in TBk projects. Keeping in mind the problem, that children and families lack literacy skills, and the underlying theory for TBk pedagogy for increasing overlap of children's spheres of influence (Epstein, 1995), findings suggest that current development should focus on Internet training for teachers and parents. An

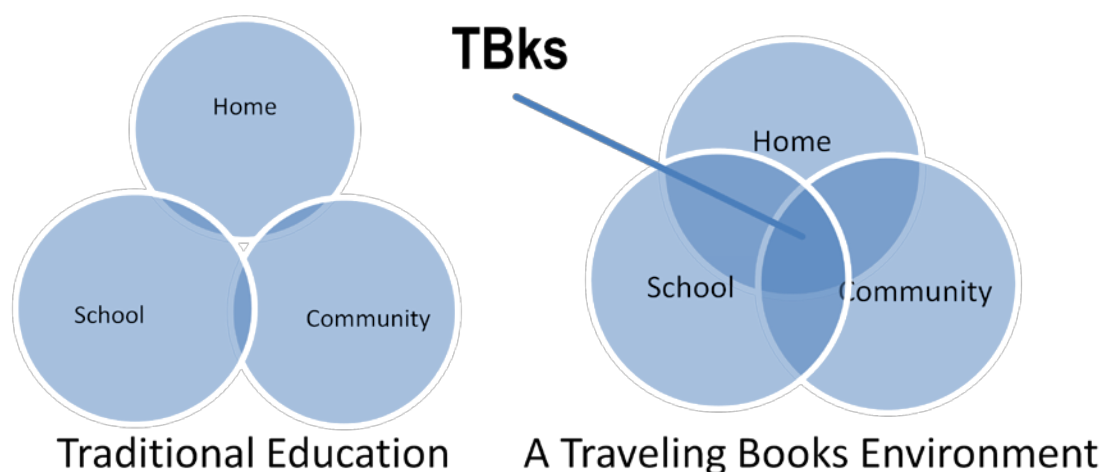


Figure 4-4. “Traditional education” versus a TBks environment.

exploration of research and theory to guide such development resulted in a tentative plan to construct a training website. Such a website could provide professional development to support teachers in implementing their own facilitations (see Finding 7 for a detailed discussion of this finding).

Conclusion of Finding 1

An overview of TBk facilitation distilled in five aspects: (a) 12 essential elements, (b) suggested guidelines for Internet-assisted training for teachers and parents, (c) a model for TBk processes (Figure 5-1 shown later in Chapter V), (d) five statements of TBk ideology, and (e) theory to support the educational philosophy behind TBks.

Contrary to what the participating teachers originally thought, IHW per se was not found to be an essential element of TBks because other means could be designed to obtain family knowledge. For example, the inner city TBks did not use IHW. Instead, family knowledge was obtained from an Input Form. Kindergarten TBks contained

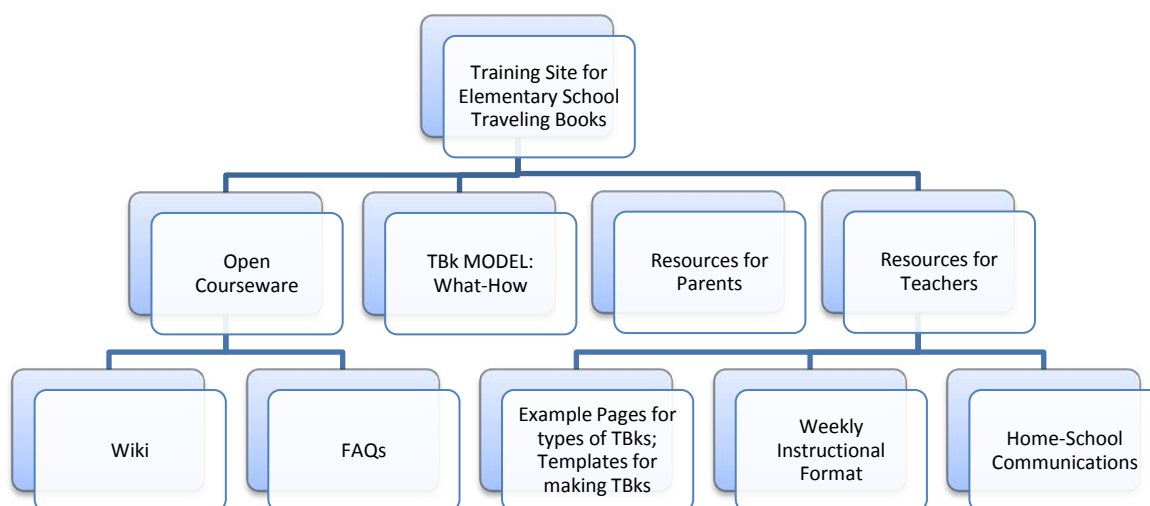


Figure 4-5. Hierarchal steps for internet-assisted training for teachers and parents.

family knowledge from students' recall of special words. However, the majority of parents indicated in survey responses that the most beneficial TBks were those that contained the highest level of PI. In the rural schools, those TBks were the compilations of one-page family-based stories written collaboratively by parents and second grade students at home. I found, however, a need for simple training to help families approach IHW rubrics more effectively with their child. Mrs. Draper, a participating teacher, summed up the IHW experience this way:

I've found that for the most part, the parents really did help the children, and they were okay with doing it. But there were a couple [of parents] that [thought] it was just another [assignment] that they had to do.

But when the students and parents sat down to do it together –I don't know how much was actually done by the student and how much was done by the parent—but I do know that when the children brought the story to school, they were absolutely thrilled to give the story and to share it with the students in their class! ...The kids were always excited to take part in Author's Chair with their story from home!" (Focus group response, September 10, 2008).

Finding 1 provided an overview for the more detailed findings that follow. The next two findings describe the physical conditions (structure and curriculum) of TBks.

Finding 2: Structure of a Traveling Book Project

This dimension refers to the way a school day or year is divided and how subjects are assigned to time blocks and locations, how curriculum is scheduled in units and sub-units, and how the learning environment is organized (Eisner, 1991, p. 74). Structural findings describe physical conditions that existed in the TBk environments. The projects employed “6-traits” writing concepts from the school’s literacy program (see Appendix A, “Glossary of Terms,” under *Writing Process*). The participating teachers found that scheduling one hour per week afforded adequate time to bring about their goals for TBks. Figure 4-6 shows how the instructional hour was divided.

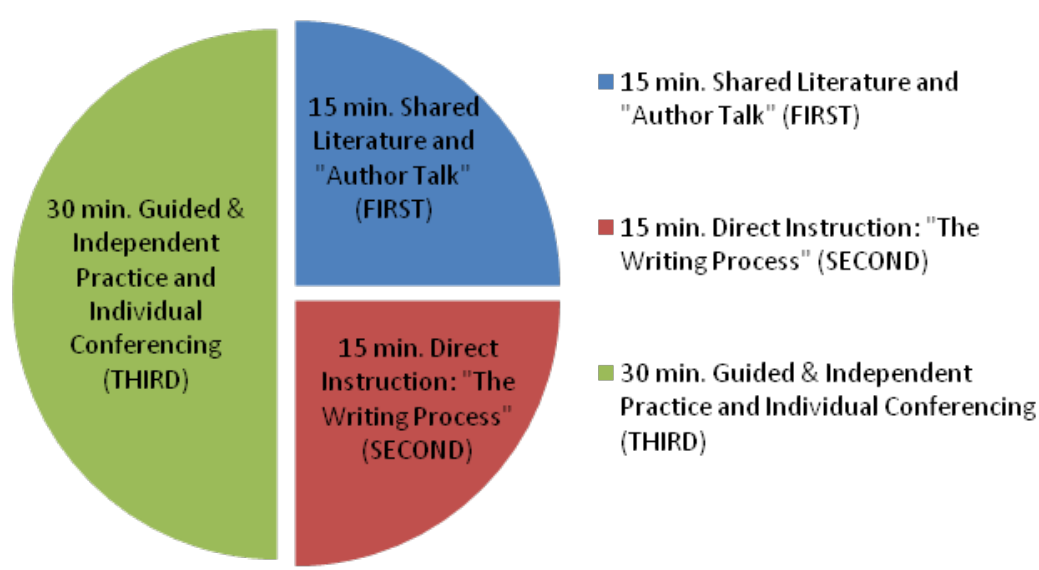


Figure 4-6. An instructional hour, a priority for TBk facilitation.

One Hour per Week, a Priority Commitment

Each interactive lesson began with a selection of children’s literature followed by direct writing instruction and then application (Figure 4-6). Teachers used the day’s selection of literature as the example from which to teach skills outlined in the school’s literacy program, helping students to approach the skills from an author’s perspective.

Structuring the Year, Month, Week, and Day

The teachers’ goal was to publish at least one new TBk each month. It was helpful to set aside an afternoon prior to the beginning of school to prepare materials for the entire year. Figure 4-7 was used as a checklist for scheduling and preparing materials.

Yearly. Teachers prepared the project with an Author Folder for each student, a class check-out clipboard, and new envelopes for the TBk covers. “Welcome Back to School” letters and Input Forms were mailed to parents approximately 2 weeks prior to

Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Schedule Preparation Time: A half day prior to the first day of school Send “Welcome Back to School” letter to parents with Input Form Calendar IHW & Follow-up notes.	Schedule deadlines for Publishing 6-9 TBks per year: TBk covers & envelopes prepared Make copies of selected student’s stories during the year ready for inclusion in the year-end books.	Schedule one hour per week of instructional time Schedule flexible time for Author’s Chair Plan to account for a bi-weekly individual “2-minute” conference with each student.	Student librarian and assistant student librarian to check out TBks during job time and account for them again the following morning.

Figure 4-7. Checklist for calendaring yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily TBk routines.

The first day of school (see Figures 4-12 and 4-13 shown later in this chapter), and a brief introduction to TBks was presented at *Back to School Night*.

During the final month of school, the teachers disassembled the TBks and assembled a year-end book of each child's writings through the year. The teachers noticed that the time they spent preparing materials was compensated by parents taking more ownership in students' learning, students' enjoying increased "literacy mileage" through TBks, and teachers spending far less time checking students' writing papers.

Monthly. It was useful to file materials by month. However, second grade TBks were not published at a rate of exactly one per month. Two or three TBks were published during some months with an average of 6-9 TBks during a school year. The following monthly goals worked well.

August—Practice daily classroom routines the first week of school. Begin TBk writing instruction.

September—Send home the first IHW rubric (see Figure 4-9). Continue the daily established classroom routines and weekly instruction.

October— Publish 2 or 3 TBks and circulate them to homes, such as: (a) the first IHW assignment, written at home and performed at Author's Chair, (b) "fill-in-the-blanks" stories written in class, such as "Johnny Appleseed Stories," and (c) collaborative "team" stories such as "Our Trip to Where the Wild Things Are."

November—Publish 2 TBks, such as the 2nd IHW and another title written in class.

December— No new TBks published. Continue weekly writing lessons and routines.

January—Publish 2-3 TBks, such as the 3rd IHW and other titles written in class.

February-March—Implement scripted lesson plans for 8 weeks (see Appendix G) to review the writing process and produce a story published both in a book and in a TBk.

April-May—Disassemble all TBks. Reassemble a year-end book of each student's work bound with a few selected whole-class writings for students to take home.

An IHW rubric was sent home (usually in September, November, and January)

the works of early-responders always encouraged and motivated late or non-responders.

Figure 4-8 illustrates the importance of timely Author's Chair performances to motivate late-responding peers. The teachers allowed 7-10 days for families to complete an IHW assignment. Assignments were followed up with a positive reminder near the due date and, if an assignment was still missing, a notice of extended deadline. If the assignment was still missing after a few more days the teacher made a telephone call or home visit to

Mon		Tue		Wed		Thu		Fri	
3		4		5 Send IHW rubric home: Due by 14th		6		7	
10 2 or 3 earliest performances of AUTHOR's CHAIR		11 AUTHOR's CHAIR for early pieces		12 Send Reminder of due date		13 AUTHOR's CHAIR for early pieces		14 NOTICE: due date extended!	
17		18		19 Phone call to offer support to Non- responders		20 Continue AUTHOR's CHAIR daily		21 FINAL Due Date for IHW	
24		25		26 Finish AUTHOR's CHAIR		27 Bind & circulate the TBk!		28	
31	A new IHW rubric was sent home in <i>September</i> , <i>November</i> , and <i>January</i> . Titles used during the study included " <i>Pets in Our Lives</i> ," <i>Our Baby Stories</i> , and " <i>Our Family Adventure Stories</i> ."								

Figure 4-8. Teachers' IHW task calendar.

ask how s/he could help with the assignment. The true motivators, however, were students witnessing peers' earliest performances at Author's Chair, and parents and students seeing the first IHW TBk as it circulated to their home (see Figures 4-15 to 4-20 shown and discussed later in this chapter for template samples).

Weekly. Setting aside 1 hour per week was fundamental to teaching the writing process (see Figure 4-6) and to completing individual conferences. In the teachers' experience, less time than that was insufficient for conducting effective TBk instruction. Teachers scheduled additional small time blocks during the weeks when students were ready to perform at Author's Chair.

Author's Chair. Not all titles were presented at Author's Chair. TBks that originated with IHW were among those that students most enjoyed presenting. Each time a TBk was nearing completion, time blocks of 10 to 20 minutes worked well for having 3 or 4 students present their written pieces at Author's Chair (see Appendix A, Glossary of Terms, under *Author's Chair*). For any given title, a class of 24 students required about six 20-minute sessions to complete Author's Chair. When a written piece was ready to present, the author would sign up to perform at Author's Chair. The first to present—with pedagogical support—always generated reciprocal energy among peers and were a motivation to others to complete their own work.

Conferencing with individual students. While the students wrote independently during the last half of the instructional hour or during daily SSW, the teacher moved around the classroom to conference with individuals about their writing. The goal was to conference with each student at least twice a month, but because needy students required

more of the teacher's time than others, careful management was required to meet all students' needs.

Daily. Daily routines became more automatic if teachers consistently practiced and supported compliance in the opening weeks of school (see *Steps for Facilitating Kindergarten Traveling Books*, Finding 4). Daily routines included checking out of TBks by student librarians.

Student librarian. Students could check out each TBk as it came available to keep overnight and bring back to class the following morning for use during class. At job time each day the appointed student librarian checked out TBks from a clipboard list and then, the following morning, accounted for them. An assistant student librarian's job was to deliver each checked-out TBk to the desk of the borrower whose turn it was to have it. If the librarian was absent the assistant librarian would handle the entire job. After all students had borrowed a TBk, a child could check it out again for a second or third time if it was available.

Each authoring community decided its own guidelines and follow-up measures to assure the safety of TBks at home. One group made a motto to "Never lay down a TBk at home except inside the book bag." The class put into place a procedure to support a friend who might forget to return a TBk on time. One group decided together that if one of them forgot to return a TBk, the student should call home to assure the location of the TBk and to obtain support in returning it the next day. Sometimes a parent would be asked to deliver the TBk to school if possible. A peer could volunteer to make a phone call to remind the friend about the TBk. In any case, peer support was an effective

element in assuring the safety of TBks.

Silent sustained writing (SSW). As part of the school's literacy program, a daily period of about 15 minutes was designated for SSW in second grade, followed immediately by 2 or 3 students sharing something they had written. Teachers initiated Daily SSW by modeling a small piece of their own writing on the chalkboard or by writing a "starter" (e.g., "Yesterday our class visited Mr. Kampen's garden...", or "Today in Science I learned..."). Students had about 15 minutes to write silently on a similar or different topic while the teacher conferenced with 2 or 3 individuals about their writing. Classroom writing routines common to many school literacy programs are described in Appendix A under the terms, *Silent Sustained Writing, Individual Conferencing, Author's Chair*.

Respect for family time. At the start of each year, approximately 15% of the parents seemed reluctant to squeeze one more commitment into their busy schedules. These parents required follow-up support to learn how to respond to IHW assignments or to return TBks on time. With a teacher's patient listening to parents who at first seemed stressed by TBks, all groups in the rural schools achieved 100% parent participation. Parents needed less support from the teacher after they had seen the first TBks circulating to their homes.

Conclusion of Finding 2

The teachers assumed that useful knowledge resided in the community and that teachers were well positioned to support parents in their mentoring roles at home (Keyser, 2006, p. 9). Teachers' methods did become more systematic as both teachers

and families became familiar with TBk routines. Almost no follow-up was required after the first two or three months. In the words of Shockly et al. (1995, p. 95) in describing a similar experiment involving parents, “Parents cared, and [the participating teachers] offered a way for them to reenter schooling [through TBks] without requiring they be physically present for a roll call of good parents.” We respected parents as busy people who have found the means to cooperate together for the sake of their children. Together parents and teachers worked toward defining the types of knowledge that they could share between home and school (Graves, 1995). Setting aside an hour per week for TBk instruction was an important key to facilitating a successful TBk project. The hour was divided into a predictable format beginning with the teacher’s selection of children’s literature, which illustrated skills the teacher intended to teach. Teachers developed strategies for bringing reluctant authors up to speed at the beginning of a school year and helping students to know what was expected. The teachers decided how to structure and manage the details of their own TBk facilitations. However, Figure 4-8 was helpful in structuring IHW assignments and learning how to utilize peer influence to motivate late or nonresponders.

Finding 3: Curriculum for Traveling Books

Two curriculums were used concurrently in TBk projects; first, the schools’ normal daily literacy program provided the foundation for TBks. Second, the literacy skills taught were applied through TBks. The literacy program itself is not elaborated in this study except to make clear that it was essential to the projects. A complete

description of a school's literacy program is beyond the scope of this study.

Finding 3 (curriculum), like Finding 2 (structure), describes physical conditions found in TBk environments. The materials, lesson plans, and parent communications that were used in the study are described here. This Section is comprised of 4 parts. First, the materials needed for setting up a basic TBk project are described. Second, the materials that were used to seek PI are described. Third, follow-up procedures are discussed which were used to help non-responding parents. Fourth, samples of curriculum are shown for setting up, seeking PI, and follow-up.

Setting Up

TBk files were set up for the year before the first day of school. A “welcome back to school” letter and input form (see Figures 4-12 and 4-13 shown later in this chapter) were sent to parents prior to the first day. The teachers were prepared to support late and nonresponding parents to return the input forms at the beginning of the year. Extra input forms were kept with the documents we handed to the parents of new students as they arrived in class so that no child was left out.

The teachers calendared their TBk events, put names on “Author Folders” for students, prepared TBk covers and envelopes, and planned communications for parents. The teachers prepared a clipboard for managing the daily checkout of TBks and filed their lesson materials and notes by the month when the materials would be needed.

Covers and envelopes. The monthly themes and concepts of the school's literacy program guided the choices of topics, and the design of templates for planned covers and envelopes (see Figures 4-9 and 4-10).

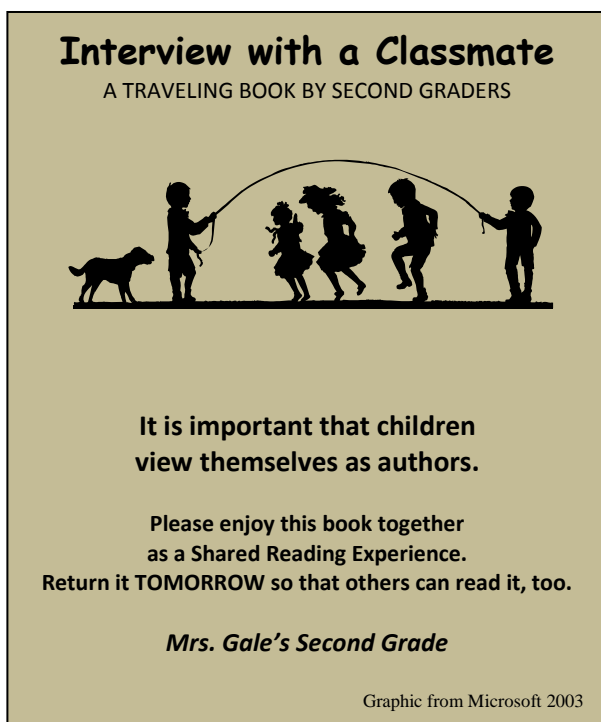


Figure 4-9. Sample of a TBk cover.

Interview with a Classmate
A TRAVELING BOOK BY MRS. GALE'S SECOND GRADERS

Sign your initials if you used this traveling book as a
Shared Reading Experience together.

Student	Parent's Initials	Student	Parent's Initials
Hannah		Derek	
Jacob		Amy	
Tyson		Lee	
Seth		Brock	
Kellie		Wesley	
Heydon		Kylie	
Jeremy		Chad	
Natalie		Analisa	
Julie		Colton	
Lily		McKayla	
Aubree		Sheridan	
Sophia		Mark	

Graphic from Microsoft 2003

Figure 4-10. Sample of a TBk envelope.

Covers. Teachers prepared and laminated all of the covers at one time. A 3-prong folder was re-usable for 3 years if laminated. Teachers used computer graphics to aid the design of some of the covers. If possible, one or more students could be chosen by the class to color the cover design, which was then glued to the front of the folder and afterward laminated.

Envelopes. A laminated, brown manila or Dupont Tyvek© envelope to hold each TBk was designed to match the cover, with a class list glued on front (see Figure 4-10).

Some teachers opted to keep a supply of plastic page protectors for students to place their published work inside, particularly for IHW TBks. However, TBks without page protectors worked well too.

Communications for parents. Small pieces of family knowledge particularly about the child were important to achieving the intent of TBks. Two systematic mechanisms were used for obtaining parent input in ready-to-use formats for TBk pages, as follows: The first was the “Input Form.” Parents wrote small notes on the form which were cut apart at school and saved until needed. A TBk page was formatted for the child to glue one of these small notes beside his or her own story on a similar topic (see Figure 4-12 shown later in this chapter for the Input Form, and Figure 4-14 shown later for a student’s page with the parent’s note glued in place). A second mechanism was the IHW rubric, which was even easier for teachers. Students inserted their completed IHW (family-based story written at home) into a page protector, performed it at Author’s Chair, and handed it in to be bound into an IHW TBk (see Figure 4-15 shown later in this chapter).

Clipboard for Student Librarian to Make Daily Checkouts

Classroom routines included the systematic checking out of TBks, which was managed by student librarians with clipboards during class job time. The student librarian was equipped with a clipboard check-out list that had TBk titles across the top of the page and students' names listed down the left side. Each day during job time the student librarian and assistant student librarian checked out each TBk to the next child on the list for that book. These student librarians accounted for the TBks again the following morning and activated follow-up support if a TBk was not returned (see *Student Librarian* in Finding 2 under “Daily”).

Three Types of Traveling Books: Three Types of Parent Involvement

Traveling book types were categorized according to the amount of time parents invested in each, as described in Chapter III (see Table 3-4). This categorization was done for the purpose of making parents' survey responses more meaningful to the question of their child's preferred TBk titles. Study findings verified that all types of TBks were appreciated, but the types requiring greater amounts of parent involvement were favored over other types.

Simple parent involvement. SREs at home using school-written TBks were classified as *simple PI*. The kindergarten project produced only this level of TBks. Survey responses indicated that almost all kindergarten parents were pleased with their SREs at home using simple PI TBks. Typical comments from parents regarding simple PI TBks included the following (see Appendix F, for all parents' comments).

“The traveling books were so much fun. I always looked forward to seeing and sharing them. My older children even loved reading them.”

“These books were great! My child wanted to look at and read them over and over. It was a great way for me to assess my child with classmates.”

“I enjoyed the books. Can they also be used in 1-3rd grade curriculum?”

Overall, I think the books are a great idea. They just didn’t work well for my child’s learning style.”

“Traveling books were very enjoyable for us.”

Moderate parent involvement. Moderate levels of PI meant that parents invested 20 or 30 minutes to fill out an “Input Form” at the beginning of the school year by writing bits of family knowledge about their child, or parents invested a small amount of time to support their child’s home writing in “Ted’s [or “Fred’s”] journal. Classes utilizing the Input Form easily produced four additional TBks, each containing family knowledge on every child’s page. For example, after each student had finalized a short written narrative, the student glued his or her parent’s note on the same page. All participating students chose to include their parents’ notes on their pages, although one child reported after taking the book home, “My mom didn’t want [her note] in a book. She thought the note was just for the teacher” [The child’s mother apparently had not read the form before filling it out]. After I asked the mother how she felt about using her remaining three notes in future TBks and she opted to rewrite the original notes. TBks that included notes from the “Input Form” drew volunteer comments from a few other students as follows:

“I saw my mom smile because it was like she liked it. She liked my page best.”

“My Mom said that she loves everybody’s handwriting and everybody’s

pictures.”

“It made me feel important when they read my page.”

“My mom thought my picture was funny [because] I was in a science experiment.”

Teachers who had used the Input Form [moderate PI] in TBks reported that these were among the easiest TBks to facilitate. Each contained input from home and could be completed within about 2 weeks of instruction due to shorter, more formatted. Moderate PI pages, however, were generally not shared at Author’s Chair due to time constraints.

Complex parent involvement: IHW. An IHW rubric was sent home two or three times during the year asking parents to write a one-page family story collaboratively with their child. The finished story was brought to school, performed at Author’s Chair, and then bound and circulated to students’ homes for SREs. IHW TBk titles were selected by the majority of parents as their child’s favored TBks. Many parents reported experiencing struggles with IHW but also reported significant benefits, such as the following from Respondent # 287.

STRUGGLES

The hardest part for me was letting her do the writing/typing, instead of doing it all myself to speed things up.

BENEFITS:

I can tell by looking through the books as she brings them home just how much she has learned through writing these stories.

COMMENTS:

[It was] fun remembering these family times together. Kids love hearing about when they were babies!

Artifacts of Curriculum Types

The following samples are organized in the order they would most likely be needed during a year. The covers and envelopes for the entire year were designed and

prepared in August (see Figures 4-9 and 4-10). Other curriculum samples follow.

The third type of items prepared in August included “Welcome Back to School” letters and “Input Forms” to elicit knowledge from parents, as shown in Figures 4-11 and 4-12.

The teachers made a template for the “Welcome Back to School” letter to parents. Letters to the parents of boys were prepared separately from letters to the parents of girls to simplify filling in gender words. The Input Form in Figure 4-13 was sent with the letter.

<p style="text-align: right;">August 14, 2006</p> <p>Dear Mr. and Mrs. _____,</p> <p>I can't believe how quickly the summer is coming to an end! Our classroom is ready and school will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 23rd. That day _____ will help me to establish (his/her) learning team for the year. I just wanted to take a minute to let you know how excited I am to be (his/her) teacher! Thank you for letting me be part of (his/her) life. I am the one who will benefit from knowing (him/her)!</p> <p>This year you will have opportunities to collaborate with _____ on schoolwork. Daily math and reading homework will begin the very first week. Later you will receive a format to write a one-page baby story in partnership with (him/her); something funny or sweet to remember that happened when _____ was small. Your page will be published in a Traveling Book to be shared among _____'s friends and their families. Watch for the first home-writing rubric. I will send it home in about a month.</p> <p>Please fill out the attached form and return it to school in the enclosed envelope, or bring it to Back to School night on August 24th, at 5:30 p.m. Also, a list of supplies that each student needs to bring to school is included on the back of this letter. I am looking forward to meeting you soon, and to seeing _____ on the first day!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sincerely, Mrs. _____</p>
--

Figure 4-11. “Welcome back to school” letter to parents.

August 14, 2006

Dear Parents,

Please take about 30 minutes to write four special notes to our class about your child. I will use your notes to personalize literacy activities at different times during the year. Please PRINT, and if you use pencil, PRESS HARD so that second graders and parents may enjoy your words about their friend.

Write about the topics in the boxes below. Use details! Be sure your words fit inside each box because the boxes will be cut apart. It is better if your child does not read your notes until they are used in class during the year. You may return this form to school in a sealed envelope. Thank you very, very much. Mrs.

<p>A note from home about _____ (student's name)</p> <p>What do you wish most for your child in second grade?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>A note from home about _____ (student's name)</p> <p>Share a brief story about a family cultural tradition:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>A note from home about _____ (student's name)</p> <p>Share a brief story about something that happened in the life of an ancestor:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>A note from home about _____ (student's name)</p> <p>Tell why you chose your child's name:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Figure 4-12. Parents' input form.

<p>(Date)_____</p> <p>Dear Mom, Dad, or Family Partner,</p> <p>Please write a short note to tell my class something funny or sweet to remember that I did when I was small. Then sign your name.</p> <p>You can write this note in English or Spanish, or in any language, or in two languages. Please print or type your words carefully on this form so all my friends can read them. I will publish your note in our class traveling book called, “When We Were Small.”</p> <p>I hope you enjoy this activity with me. Your note is due by _____.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Due date)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sincerely, _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Student’s signature</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>A Note from Home about _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(student’s name)</p> <p>Please write something funny or sweet to remember about your child when s/he was small.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </div>
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Figure 4-13. “Input form” used in the inner city school (English version).

Reminder notes were sent home to follow up the Input Form. For nonresponding parents a “Notice of Extended Deadline” was sent home on the due date. Similar procedures followed each IHW rubric that was sent home. The teachers intended these follow-up notes to convey the purpose of TBks in a non-threatening and non-judgmental way.

Teachers who utilized the Input Form and follow-up procedures easily produced up to four additional TBks containing small treasures of family knowledge on every page (see Figure 4-14). This student glued her parent’s note about an ancestor beside her own story about a hero.

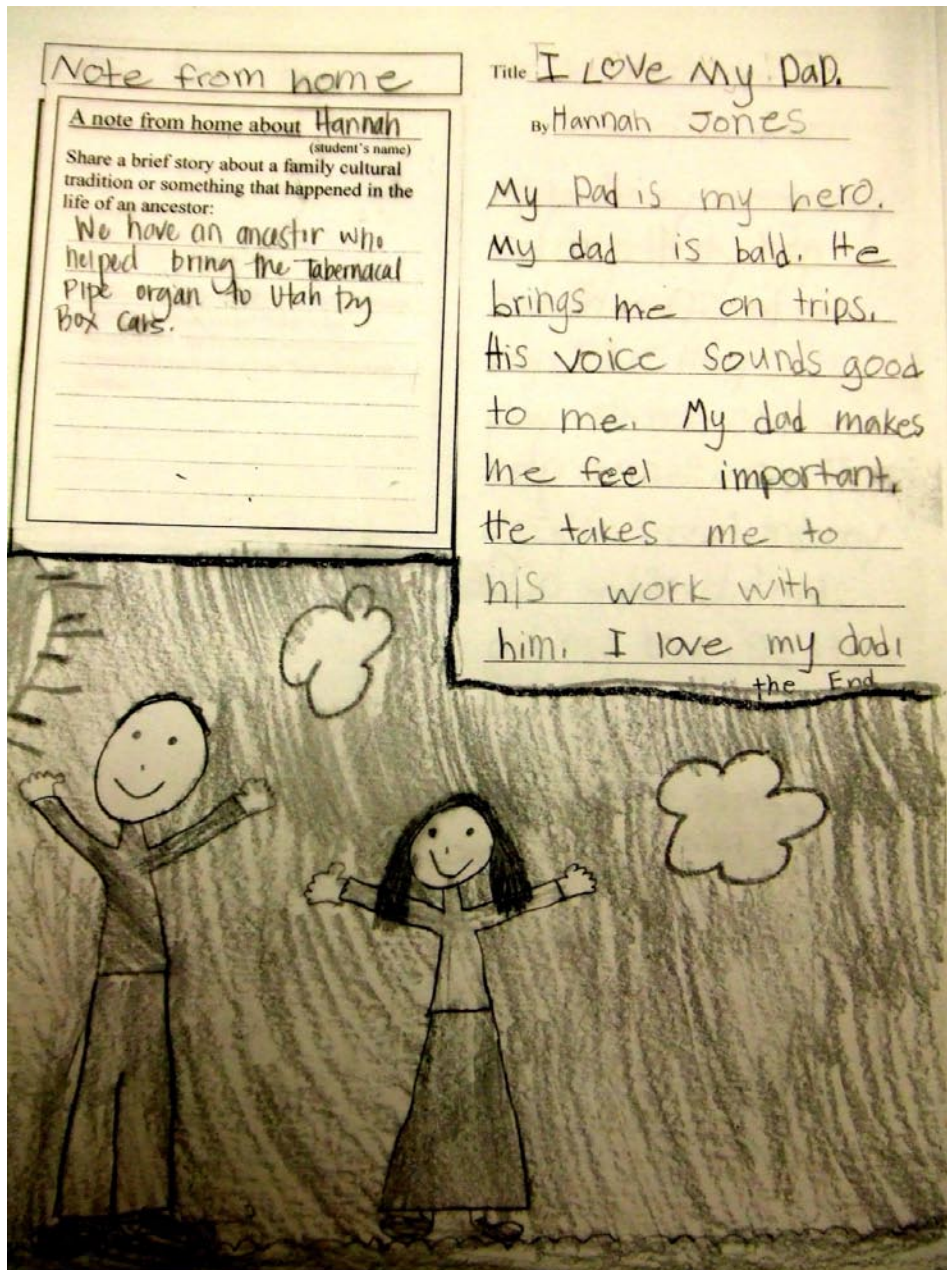


Figure 4:14. Student's page that included a note from the input form.

IHW, or interactive home writing: The curriculum. Two or 3 weeks into the school year the teachers prepared the first IHW assignment to send home with students as promised in the welcome back letter. The teacher would need a rubric, a follow-up note,

and a notice of extended deadline. The TBk cover and envelope were already prepared. The teachers reported that the nicest thing about IHW was that after parents had experienced the first IHW assignment and the resultant TBk, IHW became automatic. Teachers would simply evaluate each manuscript as it was presented at Author's Chair prior to the publication of the TBk. Most notably, there were no stacks of students' writing for teachers to check since this responsibility had been given to the parents, freeing up more of the teachers' time to interact more directly with the students.

The teachers found that a simple, attractive rubric was the key to successful parent involvement in IHW. Alternatively, one class experimented with a concept-rich rubric, which was more complex than the simple one that had been used previously (see Appendix H). The parents did not respond to the concept-rich rubric as readily as they did to the simple one, which left more creativity for families. Figures 4-15 through 4-20 depict the simple IHW rubric and related documents used in the study. The cover sheets are shown $\frac{1}{4}$ the normal size. The follow-up notes, including a reminder and later an "extended deadline" notice, aimed to convey the purpose of TBks in nonthreatening and nonjudgmental ways (see Figures 4-16 and 4-17). Occasionally a phone call or visit was made to a student's home to offer help if needed (see Jon's story under *Stories from the Study*). Options for the parent also included dictating over the phone what was to be written, e-mailing a response to the teacher (see Clayton's story), or choosing not to share a story (see "Our Memories..." under "Mrs. Barber..." in Finding 4).



“Our Family Adventure Stories”

Interactive Home Writing

Student’s Name _____

Dear Parents,

Everybody has adventures such as becoming lost, being caught in a storm, being afraid, being hurt, or making sacrifices to help others. Some adventures may last for a long time and others may be really funny. The endings of such stories can include joyfulness, fun, and thankfulness. You may not remember all about some of your family’s scary or funny adventures. Ask about them! Then choose one adventure to write for the Traveling Book. You should work together to write your story. Your story will be part of one of our best-loved Traveling Books!

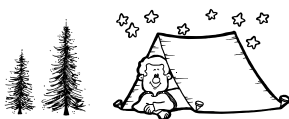
	STANDARD	POINTS (1-25)
1	Organization: Does the beginning, middle, and ending go together?	
2	Illustrations: Do the pictures reflect details of the story?	
3	Satisfying ending: Does the ending leave the reader smiling?	
4	Neatness: Does your story look inviting and easy to read?	

Total Points _____

You and your family partner have ten days to write and illustrate your story. Use the back of this page*, or use **one** 8½” x 11” page that you provide. Be neat, clear, and precise in your work. Good luck! Your story will be due by Wed., (date) _____.

Note. The back of this rubric was formatted with writing lines for students who chose to use it.

Figure 4-15. Rubric for an IHW assignment.

JUST A REMINDER:

If you haven't already handed it in, your one-page story for our class book, "Our Family Adventures," it is due on (date)_____.

In case the rubric sent home last week has been mis-placed:

The assignment is to write about a scary or funny adventure that your family has had. Use the page that was sent home last week, or use exactly one $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" page (ONE SIDE ONLY) that you provide. Work together to write or type your story. If you have any questions about the assignment please call me at school, (phone number) _____.

Figure 4-16. Reminder note for IHW assignment.

NOTICE:

The DUE DATE for the Family Adventure Story assignment has been extended until (date)_____.

Most students have completed the assignment but we are still missing just one or two stories. The assignment was to write about a scary or funny adventure that your family has had. The endings of such stories usually reflect joyfulness, fun, or thankfulness. Use the page that was sent home, or use exactly one $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" page (ONE SIDE ONLY) that you provide. You may work together to write or type your story. If I can be of help, or if you have any questions about the assignment please call me at school, (phone number)_____.

Thank you.

Figure 4-17. Notice of extended deadline for IHW.

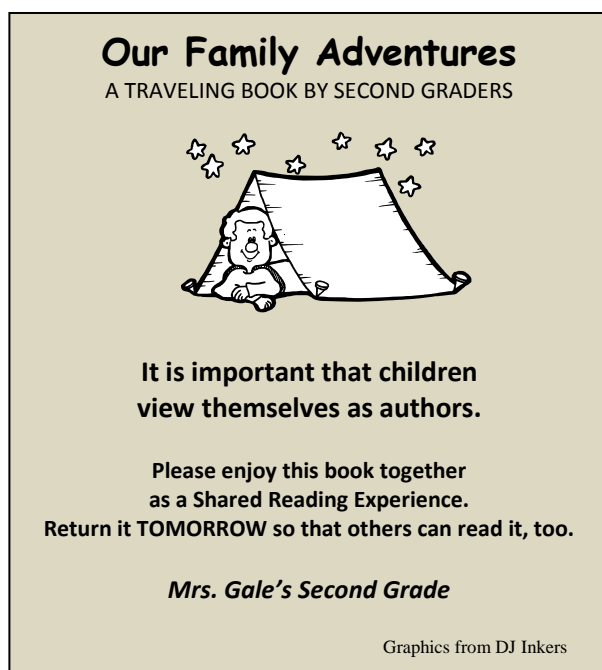


Figure 4-18. Sample of a TBk cover for “Our Family Adventures.”

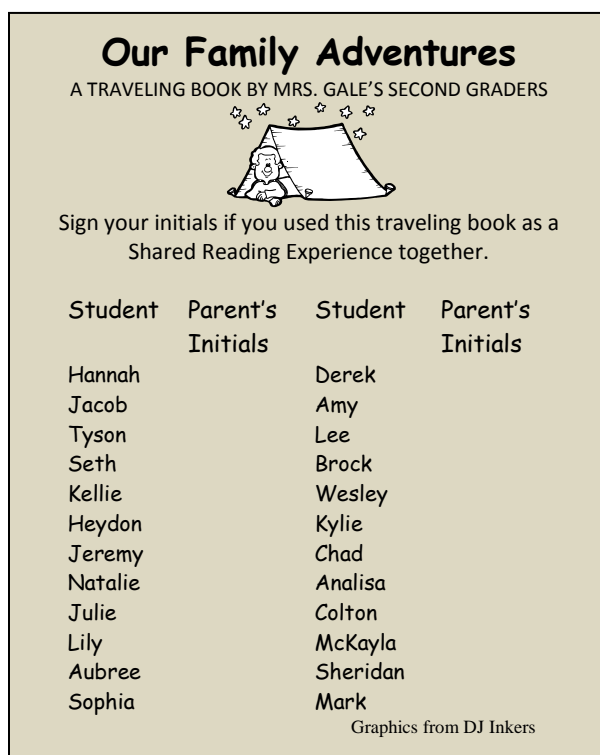


Figure 4-19. Sample of an envelope for an IHW TBk “Our Family Adventures.”

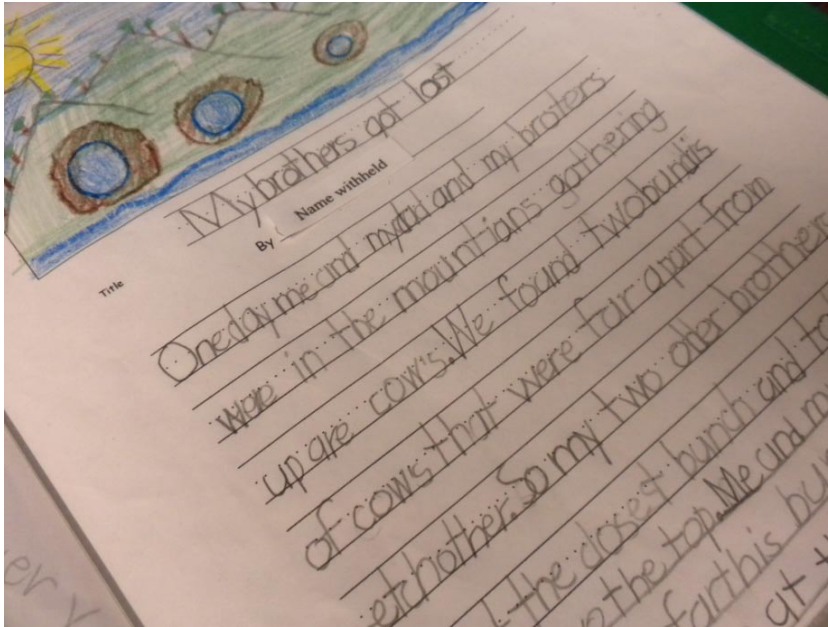


Figure 4-20. A student's page from an IHW TBk, *Our Family Adventures*, written at home.

At the beginning of a school year, a simple “fill-in-the-blanks” story format was used to get several TBks circulating in a short time. The teacher would set up a template or format on the computer for a given topic so that the students’ dictated words could be input quickly. Figure 4-22 is an example of collaborative “team writing,” dictated and published in one quick lesson by following the pattern of an existing piece of literature. However, a more common practice was to have students work through the entire writing process—planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing—prior to compiling a TBk. Figure 4-21 is a page in which individual students worked through the entire writing process over a period of several weeks. This TBk page is formatted to show the work of two authors.


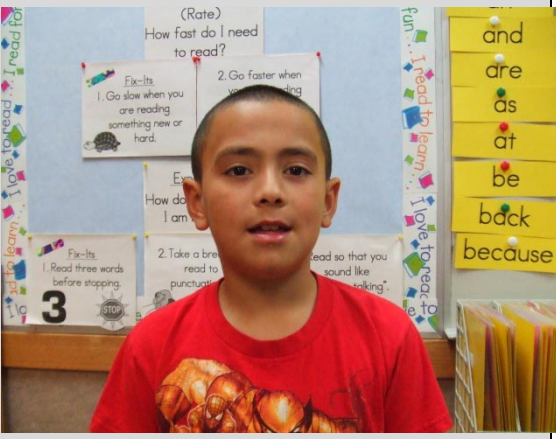
	
<p>My Interview with Mayra by Lupita</p> <p>[Note: Mayra (above) is holding the 8-page sewn book which Lupita authored and illustrated for her (blank books were donated). Lupita's text (below) was typed to make this page for a TBk. These pages were copied for inclusion in students' year-end books.]</p> <p>Mayra was born in California on February 4th. She is very thankful for her Mom and Dad.</p> <p>Her school is the Elementary. She is good at Reading. Her favorite books are about Hannah Montana.</p> <p>Math and Reading are actually her favorite subjects in school.</p> <p>At home Mayra loves to play games, and she loves MAGIC. Her favorite food is strawberries!</p> <p>She has no pets, but some day she would like to have a BUNNY.</p> <p>Mayra is a good friend, and lots of fun. Her hair is black and her eyes are brown. She is smart and pretty.</p> <p>If Mayra could do something special to help the world, she would help kids because they are little.</p>	<p>My Interview with Yunior by Lisette</p> <p>March 23rd is Yunior's birthday! He has eight people in his family. He has 4 sisters! I think Yunior is a really, really good brother.</p> <p>A favorite trip of Yunior's was to the NICKLECADE!</p> <p>He is a good friend. His favorite subjects are ALL THINGS ABOUT SCHOOL! In fact, he likes ALL books and ALL GOOD STORIES! He is a good reader and writer, and a really good author!</p> <p>Yunior likes to build or make things. He especially likes to make something that he starts.</p> <p>He doesn't have any pets, but he does like animals. His favorite animals are ALL of them!</p> <p>After school Yunior likes to go to TUTORING.</p> <p>His favorite meal is... well, Yunior likes ANY GOOD MEAL!</p> <p>Yunior would like to do something to help the world. He would like to stop the killing of animals.</p> <p>(Used by permission of the inner city school)</p>

Figure 4-21. TBk page: *Interview with a Classmate*, written at school.

Mrs. Barber's Second Grade		November, 2007	
<div>♥</div> <div>The News</div> <div>♥</div>			
Collaborative Writing:		Volume 2007, Number 1	
<p>Teams Plan Trips to Where the Wild Things Are!</p> <p>The Zebra Team:</p> <p>We are planning a trip to Where the Wild Things Are! Our imaginations are the limit— just put us together and let's see where we end up!</p>			
<p>OUR TRIP</p> <p>Story by Luis A., Arturo, Yuritzi, Lupita, and Brad</p>			
<p>Across the ocean and through a forest we traveled to a place Where the Wild Things Are.</p> <p>We went by a boat that we built. Our boat was pulled by a whale and a shark. Arturo and Luis guided them with reins!</p> <p>When we got on land we rode through a forest on Lupita's horse and in Brad's cool rainbow car!</p>	<p>We took clothes, food and a can opener, toothbrushes, batteries, chips, pizza, candy, CHOCOLATE, a camera, and VEGETABLES!</p> <p>"The place Where the Wild Things Are" looked like Hawaii! We saw Wild Clowns there, WITH CARS!!</p> <p>The clowns were all driving HUMMERS! Oh, no! They were not very good drivers!</p>	<p>"Quick!" said Yuritzi, "Everyone get into Brad's cool car! LET'S GO-O-o-oo!"</p> <p>"Look! Here comes Lupita's horse following us through the forest! And all the Wild Things in their Hummers!"</p> <p>Brad drove his car onto the boat we built, then the horse jumped aboard, and we escaped over the ocean!</p>	

Figure 4-22. Page from a simple PI TBk, *Trip to Where the Wild Things Are*, written at school. (Slightly reduced text size, used by permission of the inner city school)

Conclusion of Finding 3

Findings in both structural (Finding 2) and curricular (Finding 3) dimensions described physical conditions that existed in TBk environments. Finding 3 described curriculum developed specifically for TBks to augment the school's literacy and writing instruction. Children's prior experience and family knowledge were key elements to the effectiveness of TBk curriculum. Three aspects of the curriculum were described: (a) materials needed for setting up, (b) materials that were used to seek PI, and (c) follow-up procedures to support late or nonresponding parents. Samples of each type of TBk curriculum were represented. A teacher could prepare materials for facilitating TBks at the beginning of a school year. Notably, the more individual students could do to help prepare and color envelopes and covers for TBks before they were laminated, the more the students "owned" and cared for the TBks. The laminated covers and envelopes were filed by the month when these materials would be needed. Covers could be reused in subsequent years, although new envelopes with class lists would be needed each year.

Finding 4: Pedagogy for Students, Parents, and Peers

The participating teachers learned from Mrs. Sanchez and Mrs. Stuart that cultivating student/parent/peer authoring communities necessitated the teacher's complete respect and support for each student's and parent's ownership of language, their right to articulate ideas, their right to accept or reject the suggestions of peer and teacher editors, and finally, their right to decide whether *or not* to share special family memories in a TBk. Wenger and colleagues (2002) seven principles for cultivating communities of

practice provided insight for the design of TBk communications with parents. With this insight, some of the participating teachers demonstrated an ability to position students as authors by their instructional talk, and consequently, to influence the ways students thought about themselves and each other. For example, if a teacher is not careful she may represent herself as the giver of knowledge, the authoritarian who asks a question for which she already knows the answer and then pronounces “right” or “wrong” on the responders. Donaldson (1978 as cited in Johnston, 2004) claimed in *Children’s Minds* that, “the better you know something, the more risk there is of behaving egocentrically in relation to your knowledge. Thus, the greater the gap between teacher and learner, the harder teaching becomes” (p. 7).

The participating teachers were shapers of learning environments, which encompassed home, school, and community. The teaching performances of Mrs. Stuart and Mrs. Sanchez, two model participant teachers, and their learning environments provided a good illustration of the nature of TBk pedagogy. Particularly they demonstrated the nature of reciprocal energy for learning (Bandura, 1986), which began with the teacher, reciprocated among peers, between home and school, and back to the teacher, as this section attempts to describe.

Mrs. Stuart’s kindergarten project inspired second grade applications of TBk pedagogy. Mrs. Sanchez’ writing instruction further inspired the development of second grade curriculum, as described in the following subsections.

Mrs. Stuart's Kindergarten Traveling Book Project

The second grade teachers wanted to understand what Mrs. Stuart did in kindergarten to trigger students' learning processes in her TBk project. She responded in an audiotaped interview that effective instruction was the key to successful TBks, and that no amount of explaining about TBks could take the place of experiencing them. Mrs. Stuart explained,

By the time students produce their second or third traveling book and see how it all works and how to take them home and share with their families, the students begin to form their own goals for how they want to produce their own pages for the next traveling books.

When I mentioned that other teachers were skeptical that kindergarten students could actually "author" their own TBks Mrs. Stuart argued that TBks involve a *lot* more than simply the book. She described her steps for teaching the writing process to kindergarten students:

Tomorrow is going to be our eighth day of kindergarten, and tomorrow we're going to make a big poster that says, "I like...." And so each child will get to tell me tomorrow something they like. And I start out—with me as an example—and I write [on the poster] "I like.".. and I write what I like.

Then the children tell me what they like, and I write their words: "I like dolls," and then students come up and write their name next to what they like [on the chart].

We go through a process. After everyone's sentence is written on the chart, I copy five of the sentences on sentence strips and I cut them apart. It's very simple because it's usually three words [in each sentence], and then AS A CLASS we put them together, those five sentences.

[Mrs. Stuart would call a child to the front to hold up each word. The children holding the words would try to "put themselves together" to make a sentence. When the children at the front finished, the entire class would read the sentence aloud. If it was wrong they would laugh at how it sounded and then try again.]

And then I have each one of the children's sentences that I've typed up on the computer... their sentence is in a smaller sentence strip this time... and I go around to each one of them and they read me their words, "I like dolls." And then I cut it [the sentence] into words; "I," "like," and "dolls." And with their name. And then they have to glue that on the bottom of the paper. It's all mixed up, BUT, I have the poster right up in front of them. So the children can look at the poster. And then they put it in order, and if they've got it in order, then I let them glue it down and then draw a picture on the top of the paper.

The first couple of times we do it, it's rather painful. It's difficult for them. And I know it is. I tell them it's going to be hard. But after we get around to the third and fourth one, they are so proud of themselves because they are understanding what words are, and that we put words together to make sentences. And by the end of the year the children are doing complicated ones. But we start very simple.It's THEIR words, they have ownership in it. By October the first kindergarten TBk is ready for circulation. Each month after that one more new traveling book is added to the collection. In spring, we take the traveling books apart and compile each child's work into a year-end book for the child to keep.

The first titles include [for October] "I Like..." and [for November] "*I Am Thankful For...*" (E. Stuart, excerpted from a focus group with 3 teachers present, September 9, 2008)

It was evident that Mrs. Stuart held high expectations for her students. At first, she modeled each step that she expected her students to perform in making their own sentence, practicing it, and in making their page for the TBk, and in the manner she expected them to perform it. A teacher's page was always included in a traveling book to mentor for students how they could make their own page and how they could show their own prior experiences on the page. Figures 4-23 through 4-28 depict what TBks and kindergarten pages looked like.

Mrs. Sanchez, Writing Specialist for Second Grade Teachers.

While watching Mrs. Sanchez in a second grade classroom one day I attempted to

[illegible]

A child's drawing of a Hot Wheels car, featuring a yellow body, blue and red stripes, and a white roof. The car is drawn on a piece of paper with a grid pattern.

I like my friends. (Katelyn)

A drawing of five children's faces, each with a different hairstyle and hair color. The faces are arranged in two rows: three in the top row and two in the bottom row. The top row from left to right shows a child with short brown hair, a child with red hair in pigtails, and a child with short blonde hair. The bottom row from left to right shows a child with long blonde hair and a child with short brown hair. All children have simple, smiling faces with small eyes and noses. The drawing is on a piece of paper with a light blue border.


A photograph of a man and a woman standing outdoors in a field, with the photo mounted on a purple scalloped-edge card. The man is wearing a striped shirt and a hat, and the woman is wearing a dark top. They are standing close together, looking towards the camera. The background shows a grassy field and some trees. The photo is mounted on a purple card with a scalloped edge, which is placed on a larger white card with two punch holes at the top. Below the photo, the text "I am thankful for my husband. (Mrs. Stuart)" is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

Figure 4-28: A teacher's page: I am thankful for...

capture in my journal a sense of the reciprocal energy for learning which she generated during her instruction. She was a former teacher not currently teaching, but was sought by other teachers as a parent volunteer for her expertise and enthusiasm for teaching writing. The rapport that Mrs. Sanchez had established with students prior to this observation was evident among the students who greeted her while trickling to their seats from recess. The topic of her lesson in Mrs. Draper's second grade (where Mrs. Sanchez' daughter was a student) happened to be on illustrating one's own written work. Before the students had entirely settled into their seats Mrs. Sanchez held up a book and began to introduce the day's selection as follows.

“Good morning, authors! Welcome.” The class came to order quickly as Mrs. Sanchez pointed to the colorful book, *The Quiltmaker's Gift* (Brumbeau, 2000) and paused for “all eyes looking.”

“Here is one of my very favorite books,” she said. “Notice the color! Truly the illustrations tell even more than the words! Look—it tells the story about a king who expected everyone in the kingdom to give him a gift.”

She read the author's words from a few of the pages. The students were engaged in the story before she abridged parts due to time constraints, focusing more on the illustrations: “On this page it took—how many?—eight little pictures to show how hard the king had to think and *think* about giving away all his gifts!” Smiling at the silly pictures she asked, “Then what do you think happened?”

Students interjected, “He started giving away his gifts!” “He was less greedy!”

“Yes! He actually felt happy. See this... you can tell so much of your story in your illustrations!”

Mrs. Sanchez brought closure to the story with obvious satisfaction as if she had written it herself, and then began 15 minutes of direct instruction on illustrating the students' own stories. A child in back looked at his neighbor to visit. Mrs. Sanchez interjected quickly toward him in a changed tone, “That's a warning!” and then continued with the instruction without a pause. The child watched Mrs. Sanchez, followed her additional glances at him, and became more involved with the instruction. Finally she directed, “Open your Author Folder and take out your work.” She walked among the students noticing their work, including the work of

the potentially disruptive child. Some had begun the publishing/illustrating phase and were engaged in emulating the illustrator de Marcken while other students launched into finishing their text so that they could begin illustrating. A few students raised their hands for a consultation with Mrs. Sanchez. She listened intently to one student at a time, seeking a quality of their thinking on which she could help them construct. Thus, moving among the students as they worked she encouraged them, conferenced with individuals, and sometimes held up an example of work for them to see how a peer had implemented a concept.

Mrs. Draper and I joined Mrs. Sanchez in assisting individual students. The students' learning processes had been triggered, as evidenced by their sustained engagement. Near the end of the hour Mrs. Sanchez asked the class, "Who would like to tell something you have learned about illustrating today?" Several hands went up and she called on a few students to share something new that they had learned. After listening carefully to the students, she closed the lesson and asked the students put away their Author Folders. (From my journal notes, January 13, 2009.)

Giving the Student "Full Rein" with Words

In an audiotaped interview with Mrs. Sanchez over lunch one day, she revealed the teaching philosophy that inspired her instruction. Italics were added to emphasize the animation she conveyed in the interview. She described the student's challenge as follows.

You [as a student] have to create neural pathways to figure out how to flow those words... (laughing) out your hand! "Really, you [as the teacher or parent] should let your child have full rein over use of their language and what they want to say and how they want to say it. All of us have to let go, and let them do it, and believe that they can! And so, sometimes when your TBk [IHW] assignments come back, you can see that the parents didn't quite "let go" (Laughing).

And if they [parents] would have let go, it would have actually been better than if they hadn't had so much involvement. But, that's a process, too, to let go, and let them [students] struggle with it, because students all have to struggle in their writing, and they all have to figure out that they can even write!
It's good to have tests and accountability on [academic progress], but when we structure and box students in too much, then... well, it's almost like they are dying for the opportunity to be free to ride their horse down the road...(laughter) and take some risks! Because students just don't have that opportunity anywhere

else [besides writing]. (From an audiotaped interview with M. Sanchez, September 10, 2008.)

Critical Timing of Complex and Subtle Teaching Strategies

Mrs. Sanchez influenced second grade teachers in the rural school district to improve their writing instruction by mentoring instructional strategies in their classrooms. She listened closely to students, who became entirely “hooked” on their own stories before she introduced the editing step. She claimed, after all, that students needed the momentum of being “hooked” to make it through the next difficult steps. She used strategies that she called “partner editing,” or “editing two and getting your own edited twice,” or asking leading students to act as “editors” (see *Strategies for Editing* in Appendix A). Of course, she reminded students that *they* were the author of their own writing and they, the student author, had the right to choose whether to use an editor’s suggestions. These strategies helped students to think for themselves about their writing, to recognize the steps, and to get through them reasonably well.

Mrs. Sanchez’ stance that young authors had the right to choose whether to use an editor’s suggestions opened doors for the teacher to edit as much as needed in order to scaffold struggling authors. The student’s approval then authorized the work as their own. The danger in this strategy was that teachers might assert their own thinking along with the editing. I found that teacher editing called for expertise, as mentored by Mrs. Sanchez, to demonstrate *absolute respect for each author’s right to articulate his or her own ideas*.

A risk of scaffolding a struggling author was that the teacher might talk more than

the author might. The teacher's obligation was to question effectively (positioning the author at the controls), listen intently, and respond by mentoring the writing process. Mrs. Sanchez' strategies were in accordance with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. My impression was that Mrs. Sanchez' methods resulted in far more benefit to learners than if the teacher had edited each paper with a red pen, a more traditional and time-consuming approach.

The first students to finish publishing signed up and presented their written pieces at Author's Chair. Usually no more than two or three students presented at one sitting. These events motivated struggling authors to breathe new life into their own projects. When all students had presented at Author's Chair, the teacher bound the new TBk in a 3-prong binder ready to circulate to the homes of students for SREs with families. In order to locate this type of parental involvement in the research literature, TBks were considered a Type 4 parent involvement, "learning at home" (Epstein, 1995). Five additional types of parent involvement are listed in Appendix A under *Epstein*.

Mrs. Barber, Teacher of Inner City Students

Of a 50% return of Hispanic parent surveys, 100% of the parents indicated a desire at the end of the year to continue their involvement with TBks the following year (see Table D-12 in Appendix D, see Appendix C for the Spanish and English versions of the survey instrument). This 100% affirmative willingness to participate suggests that TBks were helpful in bridging language, cultural, and generation gaps among home, school, and community. This willingness was evident in the content of parents'

responses. Parents shared the culture in the home not commonly seen at school, increasingly as the school year progressed and as parents were able to see what other parents and students had written and how TBks worked.

Following my retirement from teaching, Mrs. Barber graciously accepted my offer to assist with her writing program for one hour each week for at least one year to find out to what extent we might build an interactive bilingual literacy community among students, parents, and peers. Mrs. Barber's school was located near a university and she served as a model teacher for the university's teacher education department. Almost daily, student teachers and practitioners were in Mrs. Barber's classroom to observe her teaching of a "90-minute literacy block," required for the Reading First federal initiative (NCLB). Her class seemed an ideal setting for a bilingual TBk experiment. I observed that the Hispanic, African American, and Anglo students taught by Mrs. Barber in her crowded urban classroom were vibrant, motivated to learn, and disadvantaged. Mrs. Barber explained that most of her students scored low on reading tests at the beginning of the year, but came to school—some from multiple-family dwellings and many from non-English speaking families—knowing they [as students] had to learn, so were quite motivated. According to survey results from this population (see Finding 6: Survey Results), although the parents and students enjoyed all TBk titles, they preferred the TBks that required the greatest amounts of parent involvement.

The inner city project required that home-school communications with follow-up notes be prepared in two languages. As stated previously, approximately 85% of the parents did contribute family-based input to the TBks, and every student received support

to author a page in each TBk. Additional parents contributed later during the year after they had seen what the TBks looked like and how a TBk project worked. If Mrs. Barber could have had one wish granted, as I recorded in our interview, it would have been to have sufficient help, perhaps an interpreter, to adequately support and obtain contributions to TBks from even more of the parents in this population.

“Our memories”: A moderate parent involvement TBK. Mrs. Barber and I sent a request in two languages asking parents to write a note to the class telling something funny or sweet they remembered about their child’s baby days. Parents had the option to respond in either or both languages. Meanwhile in class, students wrote something they remembered about themselves when they were small and glued their parent’s note beside their own story. A few students did not have a note from their parents. Mrs. Barber discussed in class that it was okay to leave an empty space; that people can have special memories that they choose not to make public. She cultivated an attitude in class that parents were free to write their memory at any time. Hence, the children of non-responding parents prepared an empty place, like a “moment of silence” for something revered, on their page to represent a special memory about which the parent could write if they so decided. Two of the non-responding parents did add a note to their child’s page at a later time when the TBk circulated to their home and the parents saw what other parents had written.

“Fred E. Frog”: A moderate parent involvement TBK. Early in the year, I brought a large stuffed frog into Mrs. Barber’s classroom and introduced him as “Fred E. Frog.” I told students that Fred would like to go home with each of them to spend a night.

He wanted to meet their families and learn their names, and to see what each student did after school and what the family ate for dinner. The students were motivated to take Fred home for a night and to write in his journal about what their family did. During the course of the year, Mrs. Barber cleaned the frog many times but had to replace him only once, claiming that the benefit to students was truly worth the extra effort. After every student had written in Fred's Journal and shared their page at Author's Chair, Fred's journal became a traveling book and was circulated a second time. Regrettably, both of my Moderate PI TBks from the inner city school have been loaned and lost, leaving no samples available to portray in this study. However, pages from two class-written TBks by the Hispanic students are available (see Figures 4-21 and 4-22).

Parent Partnering vs. Federal Priorities

Most teachers in the participating schools devoted little attention to involving the parents who did not come forward to volunteer. In a faculty room conversation I asked other teachers at my table how they managed their parent involvement. Some of them managed impressive volunteer programs for the parents who volunteered, but did not pursue involving parents who did not volunteer.

Most teachers I spoke with gave only scant attention to teaching writing as a process. Writing was not listed among the basic literacy skills used for the Reading First federal initiative (NCLB) and was not easily tested by standardized means. Yet, the conventions for writing (i.e., phonics, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and comprehension) were. Teachers whose jobs depended on having students meet AYP by the end of each year tended to focus more exclusively on teaching to the standardized

tests, or teaching the conventions without practicing their applications. Furthermore, mainstreaming requirements for emotionally handicapped students made it difficult for teachers to meet students' individual learning needs in over-crowded classrooms. Thus, it was not difficult to see why parent involvement and the writing process were not considered priorities by teachers in both urban and rural schools.

Inner city classroom stress. Teachers in inner city schools must consider the needs of many students whose parents do not speak English or whose value orientations differ from the teacher's. TBks provided a systematic means for involving the parents, including parents of at-risk students, yet the following examples from my journal illustrate some ways both urban and rural teachers continued to experience tension between parent partnering, teaching writing, and meeting AYP.

Mrs. Barber and I had just finished an hour of successful TBk instruction. I led students to the library and then returned to the empty classroom where Mrs. Barber sighed as she was rushing to lay out students' papers. She divulged troubling information that certainly had not occurred to me during the preceding hour.

"This has been a tough week," she admitted. "Yesterday I had to call Family Services because Tara refused to go home after school for fear of being beaten." We both worked as we talked and I didn't record the sad details of Tara's story. Mrs. Barber also related how during recess she and two other teachers had to physically restrain Braxton, an Anglo student, from running into the busy city street crying that he hated his brothers and sisters because they lived in good houses and he did not. Although Braxton was receiving time with the district psychologist, he would be removed to a more secure facility if his behavior did not improve. Tears welled in Mrs. Barber's eyes as she explained that Braxton remained without protection from his alcoholic mother. His siblings lived in foster homes while Braxton lived with his dad—who, being homeless had taken Braxton and returned to live with the mother. Mrs. Barber emphasized Braxton's situation by saying, "Braxton's dad came here a few days ago. In front of me, he turned to Braxton—and he, the dad, was crying—and said, 'Braxton, you've just got to learn how to read. I never learned how to read. You've just got to do it.'" This was the second time that I had seen Mrs. Barber visibly disturbed because of

pressures of her job—a job which I knew she valued. I was aware that Mrs. Barber had declined two other job offers in more affluent schools closer to her home (including the rural school where I had taught) in favor of continuing her work with minority students in the inner city environment (Personal communication taken from my journal notes, November 16, 2007).

Rural classroom stress. Stress for teachers was not limited to the inner city school. On the same day, I also wrote,

November 16, 2007: I spent two days this week in Mrs. Draper's class (see *Mimi's story*, p. 148). During my time there I never saw Mrs. Draper go to lunch during her lunch break or even get a drink! Yet, her style of teaching remained positive and caring, structured, and while attending to whole-class needs she also dealt with the special needs of five or six behaviorally handicapped children. Mrs. Draper and I could not discuss writing instruction while I was there because intervention specialists had scheduled meetings during her lunch breaks both days. She spent her recess time with an aide discussing the special needs of her autistic student who was seldom quiet in class.

It was a similar story Wednesday in Mrs. Gale's classroom. When I entered, her students had a short assignment on their desks but only half of them were engaged in the task while Mrs. Gale was sitting on the floor counseling with a rebellious, distraught student. My presence enabled the class to move forward more effectively while Mrs. Gale attended to the disturbed child's needs (my journal notes, November 16, 2007).

From these observations, one wonders how teachers could find energy and time in the first place to think about involving parents in TBks. However, over time the results of TBks on students' conceptions of authoring and having parents on board with TBks during the study improved stress levels for teachers and students, all of whom were involved with the TBks.

Teachers' recommendations. Throughout this study I asked teachers during interviews and conference presentations what the teachers wished for if money and resources were not an issue. Virtually every teacher responded that teachers needed smaller class sizes or fewer students per class.

Having two teachers working together in a classroom is not a new idea, but was surely an option that worked well during TBk instruction. Certainly, a second full-time teacher in each of these classes could have improved the learning environments dramatically and allowed teachers additional time to support less-responsive parents as well as interact with more individual students. Mrs. Draper replied during an interview,

If I had a choice, it would probably be my dream to have a second teacher in the classroom for every single elementary teacher.... You could cover so many more students; you could be with them, and work with them one-on-one, and [you would have] someone to help you to reach every single student. (F. Draper, focus group response, September 10, 2008)

Without the economic means to decrease class size, teachers as professionals may provide a vehicle for empowering parents to provide the individual tutoring that students in crowded classrooms may lack, especially to empower those parents who hesitate to come forward to volunteer in classrooms. Teachers and parents may discover new ways of making the logic of seven- and eight-year-olds more visible through questioning strategies (see Scaffolding Strategies in Appendix A). Hence, a student's dictated thoughts, written by a teacher or parent may provide compelling text for the child to figure out how to decode. The child may want to read the text over and over again because it is his own. Teachers may cause students to stretch beyond the classroom to learn and to use the skills they will need in future high-stakes tests. A noticeable benefit of using TBks as a vehicle for student/parent/peer authoring was that students' writing behaviors increased among peers in the classroom.

Strategies for Scaffolding Struggling Learners

Teachers tended to invent procedures to meet students' needs. The Stories from this Study illustrate useful strategies used by the participating teachers in three aspects of authoring: making students' thinking visible, editing, and Author's Chair.

Making Students' Thinking Visible

If a child's thinking could be represented as text, that child was regarded as an author. Teachers recognized students as authors at all times—and addressed them as authors particularly during TBk instruction. Teachers encouraged parents through TBks to do similarly.

The teacher's understanding of a child's developmental level determined which scaffolding technique might best make the child's thinking visible. In kindergarten, many beginning authors simply supplied a single word about themselves for a “fill in the blank” sentence. In Jon's case (second grade), I used a questioning technique while typing his words as he spoke them. He then used the printout of his draft to revise and edit in class.

A strategy for slightly more advanced struggling students for making a student's thinking visible included “making trace-overs,” as described in detail in *Clayton's story*. At the beginning of a school year the teachers used “trace-overs” to scaffold a large number of second graders and to bring them up to speed. That is, the teacher took the student's pencil and mentored how to write the student's words as the student dictated them. However, the teacher hand-wrote the words *lightly*—leaving only enough evidence on the page that the student could decipher the words and trace over them to make them “his or her very own.”

The strategies used were analogous to having a teacher or more capable peer serve as the child's 'secretary' to help him or her—the author—to “get it all down.” When taking dictation from a child, the adult sometimes asked questions to help the student organize the account in his mind (Eisenberg, 1985, and McNamee, 1980, as cited in Bransford et al., 2001, p. 107). If the child stopped short or left out crucial information the adult would ask, “What happened next?” “Who else was there?” or, “How might this story end?” Such questions provide children with cues for structuring their story. The next goal for teachers who facilitate TBks is to demonstrate for parents strategies to help them scaffold their own children's writing at their child's individual developmental levels.

Students' Editing Strategies

Recall Mrs. Sanchez' ability to listen as if captivated by each student author, who then became “hooked” on his or her own story prior to the editing step being introduced. Second grade students were just beginning to recognize that revising and editing is part of the writing process. Mrs. Sanchez set guidelines to protect a child's hard-fought rough draft from an ambitious novice editor. That is, she taught student editors to code a simple reference point and then use a separate paper to write a suggested change for a peer. “Partner-editing” was employed (similar to peer review) or “editing two and getting your own edited twice” using a three-tray system, and always using simple color-coded reference points.

Mrs. Sanchez reminded students, after their work had been edited, that *they* were the author of their own writing and that authors had the right to choose whether to use an

editor's suggestions. These strategies helped students to think for themselves about their writing, to recognize the steps, and to get through them reasonably well. Editors were cautioned to avoid asserting their own thinking along with the editing. Indeed, editing called for expertise to demonstrate absolute respect for each author's right to articulate his or her own ideas.

Author's Chair

Author's Chair was not a single strategy, but a well-known culminating activity that teachers commonly employ to celebrate publication (Graves, 1994). The teachers' routines for active listening and appropriate audience behaviors were set and practiced. Generally, students were taught to listen for special story details that they could comment on, ask a question about, or contribute to a "remembering." Remembering is a term used by Graves (1994) to teach the process of active listening during Author's Chair. Graves teaches that the author's piece should bring to the minds of peers their own prior experiences, or rememberings.

The featured author was seated or stood before her classmates and the teacher was stationed behind or beside her. Two to four authors could usually perform during a session, depending on the audience's attention span. A common procedure for Author's Chair might include the following.

1. The author successfully performing the story in front of the peer audience
2. The audience showing appreciation for the author's work
3. The author (following the teacher's cues) calling on two or three students from the audience to make a comment or to ask a question about an element of the story

or to share a brief “remembering” of something the author’s work has brought to mind

4. A final applause can signal closure; the teacher showing appreciation for the author’s work and adding the new story to the class library or TBk.

Conclusion of Finding 4

The teachers I observed made hundreds of decisions in a day about which strategies to use with certain students. A good teacher conducting the school’s research-based literacy program was likely to take the entire allotted time for following the program. However, this study showed that TBks enhanced the literacy programs in use by schools.

Key to the effectiveness of TBks was the language teachers used to position students and parents as contributing authors. For example, Mrs. Stuart and Mrs. Sanchez demonstrated respect for each student’s ownership of language and the student’s right to articulate ideas and to choose whether to accept or reject suggestions made by student or teacher editors. The kindergarten teacher described her TBk project in enough detail that another teacher could emulate her example. A writing specialist demonstrated the timing of TBk events in such a way as to “capture” students’ resolve to complete a difficult task. An urban teacher shared her challenges and her vision for increasing parent involvement for *all* Hispanic students. Strategies to scaffold or bring students “up to speed” at the beginning of a school year were shared: making students’ thinking visible, student editing, and Author’s Chair. Essential elements in the pedagogical dimension included, first, recognizing and addressing students as authors (particularly during writing instruction); second, letting students see the teacher enjoying, discussing, and modeling

literature from an author's perspective, and third, teachers providing simple, amiable guidance for every parent. The access tool teachers provided for parents to take part in their children's peer-based literacy instruction was TBks.

Finding 5: Evaluative Procedures

Frequent formative evaluations in the classroom involved the learner as a co-evaluator. Summative evaluations took place during the child's Author's Chair performances, and the year-end book provided a portfolio of the child's growth over a year's time.

Routine formative assessment procedures took place in two ways and thus informed further instruction: (a) conferencing with individual students about their authoring to articulate clear, unambiguous information about the qualities of their writing and to pinpoint individual goals with the student; and (b) communicating students' progress to parents by circulating TBks to students' homes. Some parents' survey comments acknowledged their own assessments of their child's work:

It's nice to compare my child's work w/others.

I can tell by looking through the books as she brings them home just how much she has learned through writing these stories.

It was a great way for me to assess my child with classmates.

Summative assessments occurred during Author's Chair and through the year-end book for each student to keep. The first fruits of these nonthreatening evaluations were the TBks, bound and circulated, which showed to parents their child's ongoing growth compared with the growth of peers from month to month. However, as beneficial as TBk

evaluations were to learners and parents, TBks were not standards based. In TBk evaluations, the qualities of students' work were not reduced to numeric values. TBks did not inform school and district administrators whether, or to what extent, TBks had affected AYP.

Eisner (1991) advised teachers to consider carefully how the evaluations schools use might affect students. He claimed that evaluation practices operationalize a school's values, and the schools' testing procedures tell both students and teachers what counts (p. 81). Briefly, Eisner (1991) recommended a variety of formative and summative assessments in order to monitor and communicate progress frequently between student and teacher, and occasionally with parents, to articulate the qualities achieved and goals for further learning. Indeed, the aim during parent-teacher conferences was to articulate the qualities and writing behaviors made manifest through TBks procedures and to formulate goals.

Formative Evaluation Procedures

Eisner (1991) is an advocate of frequent formative evaluations, and an advocate of involving the learner as a coevaluator (1991). The teacher's informal conference with each student about their writing involved the learner as a coevaluator. I noticed at least two effects that these formative evaluations had on students. First, as Graves (1994) found, I also observed a ripple effect that individual conferencing had on the other students who were working independently in the classroom as the students listened to the hushed, positive tones of the teacher's voice discussing writing with another student. Knowing that each student would eventually have a turn at conferencing with the teacher

about their own writing, many seemed better able to respond to the teacher's questions when it came their turn. Second, the teacher's individual conference about what a student was writing, or the "interview," as Graves (1994, p. 71) called it, enabled the student to process his or her thoughts and the teacher to evaluate how the student was progressing and what support might be needed.

Reporting to parents through TBks was almost automatic, since there was no need for teachers to translate the work to a numeric score. The parents could see much more than a score of their child's work when the parent opened a TBk. Eisner (1991) called such evaluations "performance assessments," wherein the qualities of the student's work were visible and could be articulated in context with the intent and genre of the individual's work beside that of peers.

Report Cards: Performance vs. Standardized

Regrettably, existing report cards in the participating schools lacked a means to reflect the qualities of students' writing in any useful way. Although some students required more of the teacher's time and energy in order to succeed than others, every child published and every child demonstrated voluntary increased writing behaviors. Each child worked on a different developmental level and on an individual learning trajectory. Every child received a mark on the report card for outstanding work in writing because nothing less than the child's best work was acceptable for TBks.

However, because standards-based reporting is important in today's educational support systems, future research is needed to preserve those valued educational experiences which are not easily standardized or compared on a school-wide or district-

wide basis. Important questions need to be considered. For example, should Lori receive a lower mark than Rachelle because she is at a different developmental or skills level? [She demonstrated excellence in authoring and pinpointed a goal to improve her penmanship.] Should Clayton receive a lower score than others because the teacher had to work harder to scaffold Clayton's success? [Could a low score defeat what the teacher had worked so hard to help Clayton accomplish?] Should Kip receive a lower score than others because his learning trajectory begins and was currently at a lower point although it traveled at a similar angle? [Kip worked twice as hard as others to earn his mark.] Certainly there is a need to develop thoughtful and well-informed initiatives to improve the usefulness of report cards for reporting or recognizing the importance of educational experiences such as TBks.

Eisner argued that performance assessment is a closer measure of our children's ability to achieve the aspirations we hold for them than are conventional forms of standardized testing (Eisner, 1999). He explained,

Indeed, our educational aspirations have been influenced by the fact that our children will inhabit a world requiring far more complex and subtle forms of thinking than children needed three and four decades ago. For example, our children will need to know how to frame problems for themselves, how to formulate plans to address them, how to assess multiple outcomes, how to consider relationships, how to deal with ambiguity, and how to shift purposes in light of new information. (Eisner, 1999, p. 658)

Standards-based scores were useful in some aspects of TBk evaluations. For example, the IHW rubric (see Figure 4-15) was designed to guide students to earn 100 points for meeting four basic expectations. However, standards-based procedures had serious limitations when it came to evaluating creative writing and the arts (sports, dance,

music, visual arts, and drama). Therefore, Eisner advocated performance assessments for affording, in principle, an opportunity to develop ways of revealing the distinctive features of individual students and of improving the quality of both curriculum and teaching. Performance assessments afforded us opportunities to use evaluation formatively and to treat assessment as educational medium (Eisner, 1999) in TBk projects. Performance assessments in the TBk projects affected essentially every student, revealing small challenges which individual students gradually overcame as a result of the assessments and as the students progressed in their writing skills.

Conclusion of Finding 5

The analysis showed that the teacher's formative evaluations with individual authors were essential to helping learners take command of their language and their own ideas. The theory to support frequent formative assessments during the stages of students' learning (Graves, 1994) was advocated by this study. Each student participated in an individual conference or "interview" with the teacher approximately every two weeks to share and discuss what was going on with his or her writing. Summative evaluations were intrinsic to the medium. The teacher evaluated each student's published work as it was performed at Author's Chair for a peer audience. At the end of the year, the TBks were taken apart and each student's work was compiled into a year-end book to create an individual progress report over the year's time. These evaluations had a positive effect on students and were essential to TBk learning. Such assessments did not require the teacher to reduce evaluations to numeric scores since the qualities of the student's work were self-evident in the medium and were communicated intact to parents. Reporting to

parents through the TBk medium benefitted and motivated learners.

The teachers did not discover a meaningful way to reflect TBk progress, however, in the schools' standards-based report cards. Only an assessment of the qualities in the TBk itself could provide meaningful information. Thus, while the administrators praised TBks they paid no attention to the detailed manner in which TBk assessments informed and benefitted students and parents. Having no way to compare standards-based with performance-based achievements such as TBks, our efforts to facilitate TBks were not considered a factor contributing toward making AYP.

Finding 6: Survey Results

This section is a summary of the analysis from second grade parents' surveys. Results of these surveys helped the teachers to better understand how parents experienced TBks at home. The questions varied slightly from group to group according to each group's activities and TBk titles. Each question in framed text below is followed by the key finding. Additional information about each result and the complete analysis can be found by referring to the following pages:

Groups surveyed	Table 3-1
Survey instruments used	Appendix C
Detailed analysis of quantitative responses for each group	Appendix D
Complete list of all parents' comments for each group	Appendix F

Survey Questions and Results

Question 1: During the school year, which traveling books did your child enjoy most? Rank the order of two or three titles your child especially enjoyed bringing home for a Shared Reading Experience.

_____ <i>Fred E. Frog</i>	_____ <i>Where the Wild Things Are Newsletter</i>
_____ <i>Memories (with note from home)</i>	_____ <i>Our Family Adventure Stories</i>
_____ <i>Pets in Our Lives</i>	_____ <i>Interview with a Classmate</i>
_____ <i>Year end book</i>	_____ <i>Our Baby Stories</i>

The majority of parents selected as their child's preferred titles the TBks to which the parent had contributed the most time and effort (IHW TBks). These titles included "Pets in Our Lives," "Our Family Adventure Stories," and "Our Baby stories." All types of TBks had been circulated to students' homes for SREs on an equal basis.

Two rural groups.

- 50 % of parents selected IHW, or "High PI" titles as the child's preferred TBks
- 36% selected "Moderate PI" titles (authored mostly at school)
- 15% selected "Simple PI" titles (authored at school).

The inner city group. This group did not attempt "High PI" activities.

- 73% of parents selected "Moderate PI" titles as the preferred TBks
- 27% selected "Simple PI" titles

An Outlier Group. A "concept-rich" IHW rubric was used in Group 3 for one school year (see Appendix H for a comparison of concept-rich and simple rubrics). This group's survey responses indicated a preference for "Moderate" or "Simple" PI" TBks rather than IHW TBks.

Question 2: Each time your child brought a traveling book home, what was his or her level of interest in sharing it with you? Highly interested? Moderately interested? Or not interested?

Approximately three fourths of the parents felt that their children were highly interested in sharing TBks with them at home.

Five groups.

- 73% - Highly interested
- 25% - Moderately interested
- 2% - Not interested

One outlier group. One rural second grade reported only 4 children highly interested in sharing TBks with their parents, 10 moderately interested, 0 not interested, and 9 not responding. From parents' comments in this group it was evident that some parents had seen only one or two TBks circulated to their home during the year and many of the parents, judging from their comments, did not understand what TBks were about.

Question 3: [Three] times during this year your child brought home a writing assignment asking you to co-author a family story together. Describe the struggles versus benefits experienced.

Almost all responding parents indicated that benefits outweighed the struggles. However, it was evident from the “struggles” expressed (see Table 4-1) that parents needed access to strategies for scaffolding their particular child at home.

Recall the outlier group from question 2 had not circulated TBks to students' homes systematically. Fourteen of 24 families in that outlier group responded to the

Table 4-1

Struggles vs. Benefits in Interactive Home Writing (IHW)

Respondent	Struggles	Benefits	Other comments
# 201	[We struggled with] procrastination.	[We benefited from] using creativity.	[It reminded us of] good memories.
#203	Divorce situation made it difficult for [writing] “family” experiences.	It was an enjoyable parent/child activity.	She felt good about herself.
#220	At first [he] didn’t want to do it. After we got started he liked it.	Working with my child and hearing his insights [was a benefit].	He thought it was a fun story.
#231	None	It was fun to remember special things together!	She loves animals! [Her favorite IHW was writing the story about pets]
#232	Time [was a struggle]	We loved sharing the experience together.	[It reminded us of] Memories
#234	Getting it done [was a struggle]!	Time together to talk about events [was a benefit].	He loved his dog. [His favorite IHW was writing the story about pets]

survey. Three parents of that group experienced struggles with IHW without describing benefits, compared with from 0 to 1 parent from any other group experiencing struggles without describing benefits (see Appendix F for all parents’ comments from all groups).

Question 4: (Urban students only)

In the future, would you like more opportunities of this type to participate briefly in your child’s school literacy work?” (En el futuro, ¿le gustaría tener usted más oportunidades de este tipo para que pueda participar más en las tareas de su hijo?)

Yes

No

Maybe

Si

No

Quizás

This mostly Hispanic population had a return rate of 50%. Of these, 100% answered “Yes,” or “Si”, they would like to participate again in TBks. This 100% affirmative result from responding inner city parents, coupled with their over 85% response to a written request to contribute a simple piece of family knowledge in either or both languages, indicated willingness to participate in bilingual TBk activities. Table D-12 represents details of this finding.

Parents’ Experiences with TBks in Seven Dimensions

Question 5 of the parents’ survey asked, “Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective you felt traveling books were in terms of the seven aspects listed.” The first aspect, shown in Table 4-2, asked parents how effective they felt TBks were in promoting parent involvement.

Results of Part a:

- 90% indicated Very Effective or Effective (5 or 4)
- 5% indicated the middle value (3)
- 5% indicated (1 or 2), Not Effective

Table 4-2

Effectiveness of TBks in Dimension “a”

[How effective did you feel TBks were in] promoting your involvement in Your child’s literacy experiences?	Not effective		Somewhat effective		Very effective
	1	2	3	4	5
[Likert Scale]	1	2	3	4	5
Total Responses for each category (6 groups, 52% return)	0	4	4	27	51

The greatest point of concern was that 12% of the parents perceived TBks as not effective in increasing their child's motivation for writing. This observation differed markedly from teachers' classroom experiences where the data showed increases in writing behaviors and skills particularly for struggling writers. This concern provides a focus for further investigation to help teachers meet the diverse needs of families.

Table 4-3 indicates that an average of 76% of the parents perceived TBks as "very effective" in all dimensions, on a continuum from 90% who perceived TBks as very effective in promoting parent involvement to only 62% who perceived TBks as very effective as an opportunity to share cultural values with their child. Seven percent of the parents perceived TBks as *not effective* when all seven goals were averaged.

Question 6: Your comments and suggestions

Results. Almost all parents expressed appreciation for TBks. The struggles

Table 4-3

Effectiveness of TBks in Seven Dimensions

Part	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Aspects →	Promoting your involvement in your child's literacy experiences	Providing opportunities for your child to see parents valuing literacy	Promoting literacy among your child's peers	Talking about culture & human values with your child	Increasing your child's motivation for writing	Increasing your child's ability to read	Meeting your family's needs and time constraints
Very effective	90%	78%	85%	62%	66%	71%	71%
Somewhat effective	5%	15%	14%	28%	22%	19%	22%
NOT effective	5%	7%	1%	10%	12%	10%	7%

parents described were mostly in reference to the IHW assignments, which the majority of parents felt were worth the struggle.

A sample of comments and suggestions.

- These assignments were really a struggle for my child.
- It was fun. A little hard sometimes to keep his attention, but a good stretch for him.
- Loved the final year-end book! Thank you ☺
- I thought it was a super project. Definitely do this next year!
- This was a great activity, keep it going.
- It was always a good experience.
- Thanks!

Question 7: One last important question: If you could push a computer button to facilitate home-school literacy, what would you want to have happen when the button is pushed?

Results. Most responses to this question reflected parents' wisdom and interest in their child's learning to read.

A sample of responses.

- [I would] have the computer somehow pull the amazing stories from my child's mind that he struggles to communicate to others so that he could then read them and share them with others.
- [I would want to have] whatever it takes for them to want to read.
- [I] don't know [!]
- I can't answer this question. They [children] get too much time on computers. I think sitting down together and reading is not only helping them learn to read and learn literacy, but also bonding [us] together as parent and child.

- [I would want to have a] love for reading and creative writing [to develop]
- [I would] be able to know what level a child should be at a certain age... and to know if they [the child] is there.
- All distractions [would] disappear!

The Survey for Students

The students responded to a year-end survey of five questions. Teachers read the questions aloud as students marked their answer choices. Results from the final question summarize the students' survey for this study.

It takes a LOT of work to be an author! Would you like to write more traveling books with your friends in the future?			
Yes	No	Maybe	

Eighty-six percent of rural and 81% of inner city students indicated an interest in writing TBks with their friends again in the future (see Table D-5 in Appendix D).

Conclusion of Finding 6

Despite struggles parents described with Interactive Home Writing (IHW), the majority of parents selected IHW TBks as their child's preferred titles. The majority of students also selected the IHW TBks as their own favorite titles. This finding increased the teachers' confidence to continue facilitating and trying to improve the IHW experience.

A 100% affirmative response from responding inner city parents (in either or both languages) indicated parents' willingness to participate in bilingual TBk activities. This finding was corroborated by the inner city parents' more than 85% response to a written

request to contribute a small piece of family knowledge to a selected TBk. A few nonresponding parents added their piece of family knowledge to their child's page after seeing the TBk circulate to their home and reading what other parents had written. Overall, three-fourths (75%) of the children were highly interested in sharing a TBk with their parent at home, 23% were moderately interested, and 2% were not interested.

Survey results helped teachers understand ways to improve TBk facilitations. Two improvements that could have been made were: First, parents could have benefitted from knowing strategies to scaffold their children's writing at home. Second, parents who were trying to collaborate with their child to write at home did not have enough information to understand how to help their children without previously having seen TBks circulating to their home.

One participating group facilitated concept-rich IHW rubrics for one year while the other groups facilitated simplified rubrics. The survey showed that parents preferred rubrics that provided a simple procedure for writing over the more detailed, or concept-rich rubrics (see Appendix H for samples of simple versus concept-rich IHW rubrics).

Finding 7: Internet-Assisted Training Development

This section is an exploration of how internet-assisted technology can become part of teachers involving parents in TBk projects in answer to the second research question. This finding recognizes the concerns and existing tentative ways to represent TBk ideology online in ways to help other teachers, researchers, parents, policy-makers, and the public know how findings of this study can fit with existing educational practice.

Methodology for Engaging Subject Matter Experts

Possibilities for designing Internet assistance to help teachers increase overlap of home, school, and community through TBks are unlimited, and as yet, undeveloped for TBks specifically. All of the following suggestions may not be immediately practical, but this section sets forth a formulation that can provide some real projects in the future. For example, study findings thus far have been distilled through the methodological lens of Educational Criticism (Eisner, 1991) using a framework of five dimensions of schooling. At this point of the work it might be useful to *extend* Eisner's dimensions to include a second, broader framework called the five domains of Instructional Technology (Seels & Richey, 1994). Each domain represents a growing knowledge base, which if placed to extend a corresponding dimension of schooling, could enlarge what was found in that dimension. Figure 4-29 show how successive dimension-domain sets work together to extend this type of development. Seels and Ritchie explained that boundaries among domains are not clear and distinct and domains are interactive and complementary in nature, as is the case with Eisner's dimensions, as shown by dashed lines in the model.

Notice first in the model that Eisner's "intentional" dimension of schooling [on which hangs the findings of this study in that dimension] can extend into the knowledge base of Seels & Richey's "design" domain for further developments. Thus, it is possible to bring together SMEs to design Internet tools to promote the educational paradigm this study recommends. Such a design could include online instruction for teachers (see Figure 4-5 for a hierarchical website model). To avoid limiting the interactive nature of

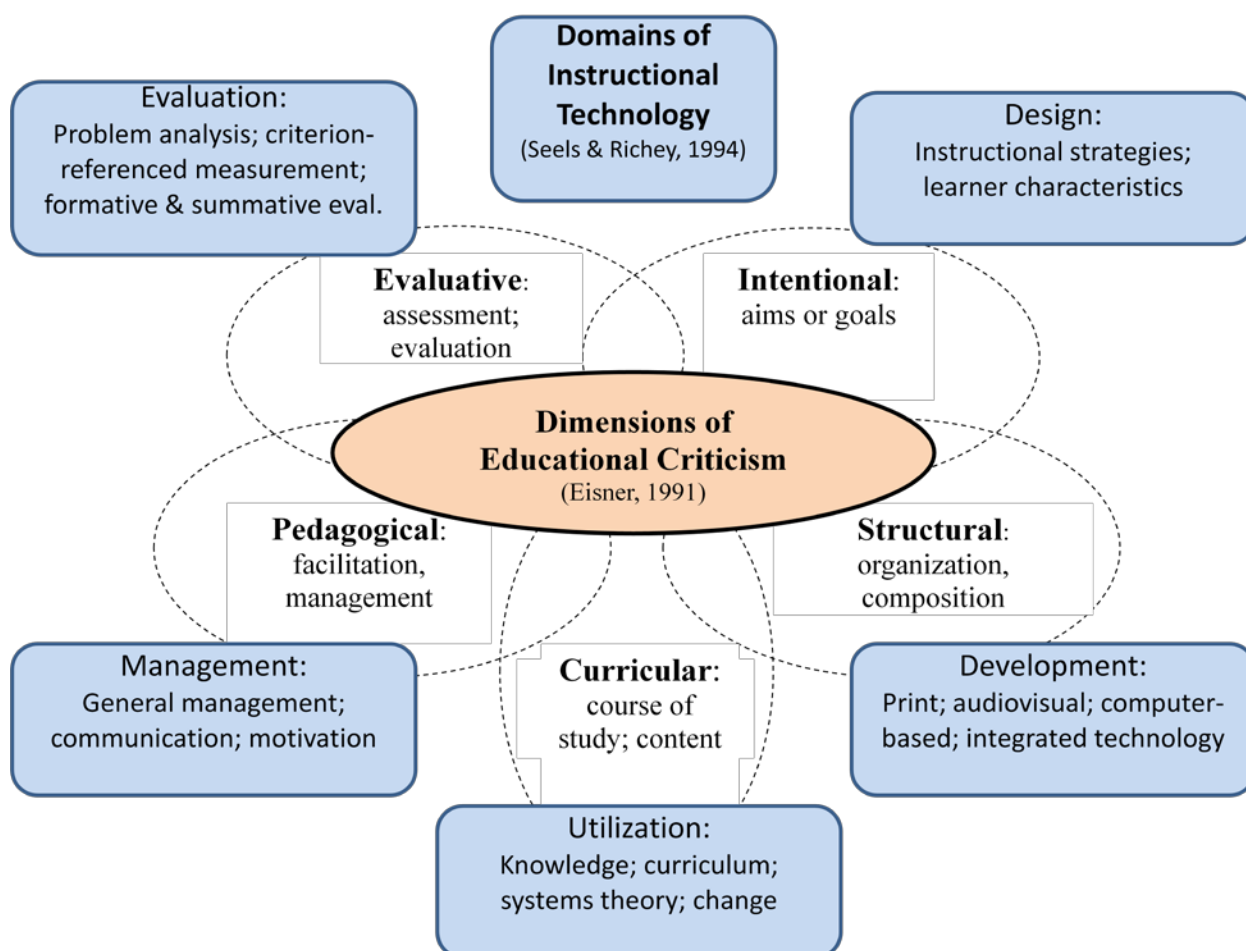


Figure 4-29. Conceptual model of two frameworks: “domains” and “dimensions.”

the model among domains, the details of tentative developments mentioned here will be discussed in the next section.

Second, Eisner’s “structural” dimension can extend into Seels and Richey’s (1994) “development” domain which includes *print*, *audiovisual*, *computer-based* and *integrated* technologies. An example that could be produced by this extension includes video demonstrations of scaffolding strategies teachers or parents have employed with struggling, average, or gifted students.

Third, Eisner's "curricular" dimension can extend into Seels and Richey's (1994) "utilization" domain (including *media, diffusion of innovations, implementation and institutionalization*, and *policies and regulations*) to enhance development of criterion-based instruction for TBks. This extension could bring about a compilation of the best examples of TBk stories, available on a blog and updated by student volunteers from the high school's technology classes.

Fourth, Eisner's "pedagogical" dimension can extend into Seels and Richey's (1994) "management" domain (in *project, resource, delivery system, and information management* layers) to help teachers support students, parents, and peers. This extension could produce internet-assisted training for parents with a threaded discussion board for questions and conversations as parents get into it, and links to videotaped strategy demonstrations.

Fifth, Eisner's "evaluative" dimension can extend into Seels and Richey's (1994) "evaluation" dimension (including *problem analysis, criterion-referenced measurement*, and *formative* and *summative* evaluation). This welding of two frameworks could provide a collaborative site for professional researchers and developers of the theory, practice, and the ideology behind TBks.

Internet-Assisted Training for Teachers Involving Parents in TBks

In today's standards-based educational practice, opportunities to see TBks in classroom practice are limited or dying out. Having experienced pressures from the National Reading Panel (2001), the No Child Left Behind Act (2006), and state mandates

for teachers to make AYP with their students, few if any teachers are likely to embark on TBk facilitation without observing them and seeing how TBks fit with what teachers are already doing. It is essential to represent the philosophy behind TBks on the Internet in such a way as to preserve and increase understanding of this research-based educational experience which students, parents, and teachers in this study perceived as valuable. A hierarchal outline for developing a training website for TBk facilitation was suggested in Finding 1 (see Figure 4-5).

A constructivist design is suggested for the development of Internet-assisted training for teachers, which is in accordance with a TBk paradigm and the problems teachers encounter in involving parents in children's schooling experiences. A constructivist design contrasts with the more traditional "instructionist" web-enhanced forms of "direct instruction" (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). Barbour and colleagues claimed that constructivist computer-based designs represented "an ever-growing body of scholarly work supported by the assertion that the act of designing and building projects leads children and adults to learn in powerful ways and in ways that they [children and adults] perceive to be authentic and meaningful" (p. 5). Barbour and colleagues described a constructivist application in the first of several phases that they are designing. Contrary to traditional "instructionist" training, constructivist applications might actively engage teachers and parents in TBk pedagogy.

The need for an effective, compelling website to address the special needs of families was evident from findings. The survey question which asked parents to describe "struggles versus benefits" of TBks sometimes elicited comments such as, "[My child]

would get frustrated and upset.” One father responded, “[My] divorce situation made it difficult [to write] family experiences.” These and other data describe a need for online resources for parents in special situations. Without seeing videotaped snippets of other families dealing with similar circumstances, parents with family challenges may not recognize TBks as opportunities to help their children in making their way through a difficult time. An effective online presentation may help parent and child to focus on instances of individual service performed for the family, instances of bravery or courage, ability, gratitude, and on strengthening a sense of identity and voice in the peer authoring community. Similarly, parents of uncooperative children can be encouraged by learning how to scaffold their pre-reading or emergent reading-level child in authoring. Improved resources may turn frustration into a more enjoyable experience while strengthening student resolve and ameliorating a difficult situation.

Recognizing that most parents are not teachers, parents need simple guidance to know how to help their children. Focusing on the positive is hardly a new idea, but some parents may welcome a refresher course to become more effective in their mentoring roles. For example, if a child at home has spelled *farm* as *fo*, what is to be said? How many parents would comment, “I see that you know how to spell the beginning of that word.” Johnston argued (2004), “The most important piece is to confirm what has been successful (so it will be repeated) and simultaneously assert the learner’s competence so she will have the confidence to consider new learning” This strategy is referred to as attending to the “partially correct.” Its significance cannot be over-stated (Marie Clay, 1993, as cited in Johnston, 2004, p. 13). If parents can appreciate a short video

demonstration of this strategy the parents may want to delve into other features of the website. With online links available, a teacher could prescribe a particular link to meet parents' needs that can be expected to arise.

Suggested Features of an Internet-Assisted Training Site

This exploration suggests that an Internet-assisted training site for teachers and parents could feature four basic aspects: (a) the instructional model for TBks, (b) courseware, (c) resources for parents, and (d) resources for teachers (see Figure 4-5). Content of the training phase of Internet development would not be aimed at students.

The instructional model. On this webpage, each aspect of the instructional model would link to corresponding literacy instruction, theory, and templates for application in classrooms. TBks would be represented as a flexible vehicle for concepts the teacher is already teaching. Multimedia to illustrate what can transpire in a TBk environment could be embedded. The presentation of content could invite the teacher's or parent's engagement in making an experimental TBk for an elementary classroom.

Courseware. This main content area of the training site could include an online course available in *Open Courseware Resources*, a Wiki to facilitate interactivity during coursework, and a section for frequently asked questions (FAQs) with answers or guidance to find answers to facilitation questions. Questions may include, "What is Author's Chair?" "How is the audience instructed and guided for Author's Chair?" "Where can I find examples for implementing each essential element of TBks?" "What steps work well for facilitating IHW?" Links to video demonstrations to meet individual

learners' needs and self-evaluation tools could be made available.

Resources for teachers. This area of the site could feature a checklist for setting up a classroom TBk project at the beginning of a school year. First, it could guide the teacher through preparing TBk covers and envelopes for the year, parent communications, and a single lesson format adaptable to changing content for the weekly writing instruction. Second, this area could explore types of TBks as well as topics, titles, and genres with the best templates and literary examples available for each. Third, it could provide a chat room and a way for teachers to post their own design templates online, and links to tutorials or videos, which might include:

- Setting up a TBk project
- The “instructional hour”
- Author’s Chair—training the audience
- Author’s Chair—celebrating the work
- TBks: a meaningful way to apply the school’s literacy program
- The instructional model for TBks
- Conferencing with struggling authors
- Steps of the writing process for beginning authors

Resources for parents. This area of the Internet-assisted training site could feature a section for FAQs such as, “How can I get my non-reading child to write collaboratively with me?” “What do kids do at Author’s Chair?” “What is a SRE?” Videos could demonstrate strategies for parents to fit the needs of several developmental levels and cultural orientations. It could feature a wiki for parents to share ideas and

strategies. Topics for videos or tutorials to help parents can include the following:

- Strategies to make your child’s thinking visible
- Strategies for helping a gifted and talented child to stretch as an author
- Interactive Home Writing (IHW): how to collaborate with your child
- Mentoring authoring for children
- Steps for authoring on a tight schedule
- Scaffolding a “pre-reading” author
- Scaffolding an unmotivated author

Factors Hindering Internet Development of TBks

My work in the communities where this study was conducted convinced me that an Internet-based implementation of TBks for student use is premature at the present time, at least in the communities described here. That is, transferring features directly from the paper-based design of TBks to designing and developing Internet applications of TBks may currently be a rash and untimely endeavor. The parents who most need encouragement to participate are the ones the least likely to have Internet access, and those excluded elements would frequently exclude representation from Hispanic communities. A digital divide does exist among families in this project, and pushing for an Internet-based TBk program would likely accentuate this divide.

Early in my doctoral program I worked under Dr. David Wiley and Dr. Yanghee Kim to design a few simple aspects of a student/parent/peer interactive authoring website. The entry path to my site depicted the large front doors of an aging, well-kept school

building with intriguing background music and a pedagogical agent in the person of an amiable male principal welcoming the visitor to “Elementary Hall.” However, more research was needed before I could refine and continue developing this website. As I created html pages to experiment with I was discouraged by questions that remained unanswered. For instance, how could a teacher conduct an interactive *Author’s Chair* between an author and a responsive peer audience from a computer? That was prior to the days of Wimba (<http://www.wimba.com/>), which now allows us to have courses that meet face-to-face and online at the same time. However, even if every family owned a computer, how could a computer-based TBk circulate for SREs with families as effectively as the paper copy had? What about the camaraderie among students in the class as one places a TBk into his or her book bag to take home while the others check the student librarian’s clipboard for the dates of their own pending turns? Still convinced that a TBk website is an exciting possibility for the future, I put aside my design until further evidence might provide more justification for effort expended in this area. At such time this endeavor will require the expertise of Subject Matter Experts in both the dimensions of schooling (Eisner, 1991) and the domains of Instructional Technology (Seels & Richey, 1994).

The purpose of this section was to explore how Internet-assisted training might guide “teachers involving parents in TBks” and to make suggestions based on data from the research to substantiate this type of Internet development.

Conclusion of Finding 7

Internet-assisted training can provide guidance and interactivity among teachers

and parents facilitating TBks. Based on data from this research, the core values and essential elements of TBks could provide tools to engage teachers in involving “a parent for every child” in TBks and increase understanding of how TBks may enhance achievement of AYP.

During this study, a digital divide did exist among families. Pushing for Internet-based home-school TBk activities per se would most likely accentuate this divide unless other resources could be located. At the current time, sponsoring home-school TBk activities on the Internet might be likened to “getting the cart before the horse” and could compound the teachers’ workload. Instead, urgency was expressed among the participating teachers to communicate findings of this research to as many teachers, parents, and researchers as possible. This sense of urgency was initiated by pressures from federal mandates that hindered educational practices such as TBks, which are not standards-based in nature. Hierarchical steps for an Internet-assisted training site were suggested (see Figure 4-5) to develop Internet-assisted tutorials, videos, and interactive courseware. Constructivist designs were recommended to actively engage new teachers in TBk facilitation along with a schools’ reading program.

A methodological suggestion was made to expand Eisner’s framework (1991) to draw from the knowledge bases of Seels and Richey’s domains of instructional technology. Together, Eisner’s (1991) and Seels and Richey’s (1994) frameworks can set forth a formulation (see Figure 4-29) for educators to collaborate with SMEs for future technological developments in keeping with the philosophy and theory of TBks.

Stories from the Study

Much of the data in this study distilled as stories. The stories provide a more vivid rendering of the complex and subtle qualities that transpired in TBk environments. The stories attempt to communicate the effects TBks had on struggling, handicapped, average, and gifted readers and on children of non-responding parents, and the longitudinal effects TBks had on former students.

Mimi's Story: Effects of Traveling Books on an Average Student

Two impromptu encounters with a former student of Mrs. Draper's, an average student by Mrs. Draper's records, exemplified how TBks affected one former student. After the first unexpected conversation with Mimi, I wrote the following.

September 9, 2008:

I hurried toward the school building where I was scheduled to help Mrs. Draper with her second grade writing program. A third grader came running from across the playground with two of her friends calling, "Mrs. Little! Mrs. Little! I'm an author!"

"You're an author?" I asked, as Mimi and her friends approached. "How is it that you're an author?"

"Well," she panted, "in the summer my mom bought me a desk so I can have my own place to write."

"Your mom did that for you?" I looked at her incredulously.

"Yes," she assured me, "so I can write."

"What a wise, wonderful mom you must have," I said, looking into her eyes.

She nodded enthusiastically. We conversed further before she ran off to play.

I turned back toward the building feeling grateful for parents who understood the brief written communication to parents printed on the front cover of every TBk

that went home with students: *“It is important for children to view themselves as authors...”*

September 25, 2008:

I passed Mimi walking with her father and sister on a local neighborhood sidewalk this evening. She greeted me excitedly, as children often do when they see a teacher in the community outside of school. Then to my astonishment, she turned to her father and said boldly, “Dad, this is Mrs. Little. She is the one that made me an author!”

After I recovered from Mimi’s announcement we visited for a few minutes. I thanked him for encouraging Mimi’s authoring and described how she had been an example to her classmates. After our visit I walked on, considering how Mimi’s enthusiasm for authoring had blossomed despite rowdy conditions that had prevailed in her classroom the year before. I looked through my old TBk copies and found evidence of Mimi’s rapid growth in her use of written language throughout the previous year and evidence of her parents’ part in that process.

My artifacts contained empirical evidence that Mimi’s parents had shown responsibility for her literacy learning in three IHW TBks and in two additional TBks containing parent input, although I was not sure whether all of these TBks had ever circulated to Mimi’s home (this group did not circulate the TBks routinely). Yes, despite improvements that could have been made, the philosophy behind TBks seemed to have affected Mimi as was intended. (From two impromptu interviews recorded in my journal, September 9 and 25, 2008)

Mimi and many of her classmates had caught and reciprocated energy for authoring despite less than optimal learning conditions among disruptive classmates, and despite limited communication between teacher and parents through TBks. This story may indicate that partial implementation of TBks may prove beneficial to at least some students.

Clayton's Story: Effects of TBk Strategies on a Behaviorally Handicapped Child

I wrote about Clayton as if my journal were a shoulder to cry on, for if this large, aggressive, second-grade student felt angry he slammed desks together and hurt anyone in his way including the teacher. If he felt happy he might climb and stand on the chalk tray while hanging like a monkey from the top edge of the chalkboard, or search for other dangerous ways to gain attention. Clayton's reading scores were at rock bottom and showed no improvement from week to week while his classmates' scores began to skyrocket. I wanted to involve Clayton's mother in his schooling but she couldn't be reached. As recorded below, I tried some desperate scaffolding strategies with Clayton while my efforts to connect with his mother failed repeatedly.

September 16, 2006: I am determined that if Clayton does nothing else in second grade he will produce a story for each and every TBk. He sits close to me so that if I ask the class to write and he refuses, I can offer him "trace-overs." Usually he wants trace-overs because that makes him 'dictator' and me his 'personal secretary'.

I pick up his pencil and, face-to-face, wait for his words. If no words come I continue class instruction from the proximity of his desk, but Clayton's task remains the same until he responds. I write his exact words very lightly so that he can barely see them on the paper, using round circles and straight sticks of standard Zaner-Bloser manuscript writing. If he complains I hand him the pencil for awhile. Together we usually get something down and eventually he traces over the words to "make them his own." We might then have a starting point, or perhaps even something to celebrate and share with his peers.

September 23, 2006: Options with Clayton are limited for the school psychologist, intervention teacher, and for me. Today all students had completed their work and lined up for lunch when Clayton suddenly shoved his way into the line hurting two girls quite badly. His seatwork was not finished.

In a steady voice I informed the other students that they would have to go to lunch without Clayton. My partner teacher in the next room heard Clayton storming loudly and stepped in to take my students along with hers to lunch. I waited patiently for Clayton's storm to subside and then helped him work through his

unfinished paper and also to write apologies to the injured girls before we could eat—but not in the lunchroom. It is such a challenge to know how to help Clayton.

October 7, 2006: Learning how to work and interact with others through speaking and writing is a critical goal for Clayton to which he is beginning to show some hope of responding. He sometimes notices that he in fact has a learning partner and a learning team, and he even looks at them sometimes. However, Clayton hasn't handed in his IHW assignment for *Baby Stories*. His mother is ignoring or is not receiving my notes and does not respond to phone messages. She works at a night club and sleeps during the day.

October 14, 2006: Today Clayton brought his mother's e-mail address to me as requested. Together Clayton and I constructed an e-mail message to his mother. We asked her to tell us something funny or sweet to remember about him when he was small.

October 17, 2006: By e-mail, Clayton's mother replied to our request with a short narrative of having to take Baby Clayton to work with her one night because she did not have a babysitter. As the story went, she was scheduled to sing at a microphone but her baby would not stop crying. Finally, she picked him up and held him while she performed. She wrote that the audience loved Clayton's "singing" with his Mom and the audience clapped for him!

October 21, 2006: Clayton helped me to copy his story onto a page for a TBk and then he illustrated it. At Author's Chair he beamed as he read his story in front of the class. He relished calling on two or three peers for their comments. Clayton was among the first to take a photocopied version of this TBk home for a SRE with his mom.

October 24, 2006: It seems that sharing his first family-based story was a turning point for Clayton toward learning how to produce purposeful writing that he can use to gain positive attention (from my journal notes, September-October, 2006).

I am constantly amazed at children's capacity to show charity for peers who have special challenges. Clayton's peers were a great audience, celebrating his story with excellent questions and interest. Clayton's mother did not participate in IHW again during that year, but as Graves described (1994), if teachers can scaffold students to create stories of bravery, service, or cultural pride about themselves, the students can gain increased purpose for literacy learning. After his mother's initial story, Clayton received

scaffolding to author additional stories of family service or bravery for the next two IHW TBks.

The participating teachers found that classmates benefited in a special way when a TBk page could be produced for a severely handicapped peer by parents, aides, classmates, or teachers who knew them well. Despite Clayton's challenges, he was scaffolded to express his own style of gratitude for gifts of life; a good body, an intelligent mind, and freedom to think for himself. In any case, the one input Clayton's mother provided that year by e-mail was effective in changing Clayton's learning in a more positive direction.

Mrs. Stuart had called it "painful" in the beginning weeks of school to bring a class of kindergarten students up to speed. Similarly second grade teachers agreed that the beginning weeks could be considered "painful," with so many students needing individual types of scaffolding to succeed, including "trace-overs" to scaffold their earliest writing efforts. For example, Mrs. Gale explained,

With everyone needing help at the same time and with only one teacher to make trace-overs, or whatever, for them, [my students] learned to think quickly and to give [the teacher] their words while it was their turn or [the teacher's] service might be lost to another student.

Despite challenges at the beginning of a year, the payoff for pulling words and stories from reluctant second graders always came. For many, it did not begin until after the first round of Author's Chair and the circulation of the first TBk to students' homes. Nevertheless, the payoff included motivated students who discovered that their "author's voices" were valued in the authoring community. Sometimes motivation increased slowly, as with Clayton, but it increased as students and parents experienced TBk

activities. By structuring support for the parents' roles in TBk facilitation, the teachers' jobs became easier as the year progressed. In my opinion, it was worth extra effort early in the year to connect with Clayton's mother and a few other non-responding parents in order to see the attitudes of difficult students improve.

Dusty's Story: Longitudinal Effects of TBk Philosophy

Imagine my delight when I boarded a university shuttle bus and the driver recognized me as his former second grade teacher. I recalled Dusty from the early 1990s, a stubborn farm kid obsessed with a small toy tractor that he kept smuggling into school. After fourteen years, what Dusty remembered about second grade was that he had had an audience with whom he could share his beloved tractors, and that he had tried to write using the strategies of well-loved authors of children's literature. He also remembered what I remembered, that at first he did not want to be in school. I went back to my earliest TBk artifacts and found Dusty's stories and a copy of the year-end book, from which I composed the following account.

The four team members of Dusty's learning team had been planning a trip to "Where the Wild Things Are." Three members wanted to travel by speedboat, but Dusty wanted to travel by tractor.

I realized that Dusty could not compromise his tractor idea and was distancing himself from his teammates. The team, in turn, did not want to travel by tractor. Using questions to scaffold the three in their negotiation with Dusty and referring to our class chart "*what teamwork looks like*," I tried to help them cooperate. One student reluctantly suggested, "Well, we could go by speedboat *and* by tractor."

Instantly Dusty proposed, "We could pull the tractor with the boat! When we come to land, the boat's wheels could fold down and we could pull it with the tractor!" The rest of the team caught Dusty's spirit of invention and began contributing to the innovation.

Other teams in the classroom heard about the tractor-speedboat idea and began embellishing their own methods of travel in their stories. For instance, one team decided to travel suspended by ropes from a helicopter that would fold up like a suitcase while not in use, and others wanted to be pulled by a friendly dolphin or ride on the backs of butterflies.

The collaborative writing activity culminated with a newsletter-style TBk about the teams' fantasy trips. In the years that followed, I used Dusty's experience to illustrate how teams could build on one another's ideas to write great stories collaboratively (taken from my teaching notes, artifacts, and the class year-end book for 1993-1994).

Fourteen years later Dusty accepted my invitation to bring his wife, Janette (pseudonym), and join me for breakfast and an interview. One cannot draw broad conclusions from interviewing just one former student. However, various other former students who have experienced TBks have substantiated many of Dusty's views. My conversation on the bus with Dusty, our subsequent interview, and many conversations with other former students seemed to validate that student/parent/peer authoring can increase academic achievement. Much to my delight, Dusty was able to recall many elements of second grade instruction that had affected him. Dusty's responses are as follows.

Dorothy- Today is September 25, 2008. Talk about the things you liked about elementary school, Dusty, before you talk about the things you disliked (laughing).

Dusty- Well, the dislike list isn't very long, I kind of forgot that one. But I liked the... the thing I remember the most is the themes you had. You would go through and we'd read a book. And then you'd have themes, and we'd write with them, you know, we'd write a story, and somehow you'd incorporate it into math, I don't know how you did that, but I remember it was incorporated into everything. The decorations in the room were all coordinated with it, ... the math, and reading, and ... everything was all tied in together the two or three weeks that we were working on it. What I remember most was the Wild Things story.

Dorothy- ...Oh my gosh, how many years has that been? I mean, how old are you now? You were eight years old then.

Dusty- I was eight years old then, and I'm 22 now [it has been 14 years].

Dorothy- What would cause you to remember the title of something you wrote in second grade?

Dusty- Probably just the theme, and how you had it incorporated into everything... We read the book, and then we had the Reading Rainbow story that had that book in it, and... then we wrote stories, you know, we wrote our own coordinating story with it, and... kind of had the same story line, but just... our own story.

Dorothy- When you talk about [writing] "our own story," did you remember that you were part of a team when you wrote that story? You had four or five classmates that had to agree on how to write the story.

Dusty- I don't remember that part.

Dorothy- That's the part I do remember.

Dusty- Oh?

Dorothy- I have used your example... throughout the years [to teach students how to work together as teams,] so it's not hard for me to remember what you wrote.

Dusty- Oh, yeah?

Dorothy- ... and this whole project of traveling books has evolved ... since then.

Dusty- Hmm.

Dorothy- ... You wanted to travel to where the Wild Things are by... do you remember? How did you want to travel?

Dusty- I don't remember. I just remember writing the story. My... we had a boat with a ... for some reason we had to cross a body of water. And so we had a boat. And being a farmer, I liked my tractors. And so I had a trailer behind this boat and a tractor on it. And so as soon as we got to the shore, we turned it around, and the boat had wheels that folded down, and then the tractor pulled the boat across the land.

Dorothy- ...and until you came up with an idea like that, your team... really did not want to travel by tractor.

Dusty- Mmm-hm, yeah.

Dorothy- ...but, you worked together till you figured that out...

Dusty- Yeah. I don't remember so much the team. I just remember writing the

story...(laughter).

Dorothy- Well, where did the whole tractor idea come from?

Janette- It's just embedded in his brain (laughter).

Dusty- It's...I'm just a farm boy and liked going to work with tractors, and trucks and everything since I was a little kid.... (Janette agreeing) ... and so, anytime I could write about tractors, or have a tractor....

Dorothy- Okay, [so, you worked together with your team to write the Wild Things story.] ...and you had in mind who your audience would be...

Dusty- Mm- Hmm. Yes. It was during parent teacher conferences. You told us we would be sharing it with our parents.

Dorothy- Okay, [suppose] you were writing a story just for your teacher as a requirement, without your teammates. Would it have had the same... do you think you would still remember it?

Dusty- No. I have written that way for other teachers, and I don't remember in the slightest what I wrote about. ... And so, having [my audience] in mind motivated me a little bit more. Because as a little kid, otherwise I would not have written the story.

Dorothy- Did writing stories have any effect on your learning to read?

Dusty- That it did. It did.

Dorothy- That's a great example. Thank you, I appreciate your willingness to share.

(Excerpts taken from an interview with Dusty and Janette, September 26, 2008)

After 14 years, Dusty recalled the integrated nature of the curriculum that had functioned in his second grade. He recalled the topic of another story that he had written, one in which he called himself "Dusty CornSeed" after the pattern of Johnny Appleseed (because Dusty chose to plant corn seeds instead of apple seeds in his new land). In addition, Dusty recalled experiencing three pedagogical elements that I considered essential to TBk facilitation.

1. Utilizing prior learning (tractors and farming; Gagné, 1985)

2. Having an audience (peers) and purpose (publication) for writing (Graves, 1994)

3. Having a valued voice in a student/parent/peer authoring community

Dusty attributed his retention of what transpired in second grade to his being able to share his writing with an audience. The interview made it clear that being able to share his first love, farming and tractors, through the curriculum at school had had an impact on his motivation for literacy learning for a long time afterward.

Kip's Story: Increasing Parents' Ownership of Children's Literacy Learning

Kip's story, taken from my journal writings, illustrates the importance of both peers and parents to the essential structure of literacy learning in the classroom (Bandura, 1986). The involvement of Kip's parents was simple but had a profound effect on Kip's motivation to work.

Several years ago a thin, blond seven-year-old wearing clean but ill-fitting hand-me-down clothing followed his peers around the playground. He seldom spoke or interacted with them. It seemed as if Kip had been placed in a box from birth without knowing how to interact with anyone. His sentences consisted of one-word responses.

Kip's father explained during a parent-teacher conference that he himself was a man of few words; it was his family's way. However, test results showed Kip's vocabulary to be alarmingly limited. Despite two years of special education and reading intervention, Kip's vocabulary remained low and he was still unsure of basic letter sounds.

Why hadn't school interventions helped Kip the way interventions had helped some of my other students? I approached our district reading coach about his case. She shared an article that I described in the Review of Literature entitled "The Early Catastrophe: The 30-Million Word Gap by Age 3" (Hart & Risley, 2003), a study of trends in amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction between the parents and young children from three economic groups. As stated, the results showed an ever-widening gap between levels of development over

years, or the developmental trajectories within each group.

I felt sure that Kip's parents, despite a lack of formal education, held powerful keys to unlock Kip's learning. I learned that Kip and his siblings and cousins lived on a sheep farm. When I chatted with Kip about it, he gave short responses to my questions, which we used to make a story about feeding the sheep.

The story was later shared with Kip's reading intervention group. His intervention teacher joined me in helping Kip to write down more of what he saw and heard on his family's farm.

Later that month our first IHW assignment was past due and Kip's family had not responded, even to the extended deadline notice. I telephoned his mother to ask how I could help. She declined help, but two days later Kip brought a hand-written story about his becoming lost while herding sheep in the mountains. At Author's Chair I sat behind Kip to whisper his words as he haltingly shared his exciting story with peers.

Kip's story, which I considered a treasure, revealed that his dad was a fence builder. It also verified to me that his family's language and writing skills were extremely limited. The very fact that the story had been written despite the parent's limitations revealed that the parents cared very much and wanted to participate in meaningful ways.

I invited the father to bring his fencing tools to school to show the students. He drove his old truck filled with tools and spools of wire to the side of the school building where our class walked out. While Kip's peers learned the difference between barbed wire and sheep wire from a weathered farmer in worn work clothing, I observed reciprocal energy taking place between Kip and his father in the presence of his peers that confirmed how a brief interaction in the presence of classmates—such as a glance or a smile from a parent—can enhance a student's motivation to achieve in school. The most obvious key to the effectiveness of this interaction was that Kip's peers were present (My journal notes, October, 2003).

A few years passed and Kip was now in sixth grade. I learned from a faculty room conversation that Kip still struggled with reading, but willingly worked harder than his friends to accomplish the same "book-learning" that his friends were accomplishing. Kip's willingness to work hard in school was a brave attribute that his parents continued to support by valuing education and communicating frequently with Kip's teachers.

Although Kip would probably always have to work harder than his friends to

accomplish comparable literacy work, his learning trajectory seemed to be accelerating on a similar angle to that of his peers. I felt that his success in second grade with TBks, which included many sheep stories, was a good thing for Kip and his family with long term consequences for Kip. Indeed, Kip possessed cognitive strengths which, in traditional literacy programs, may never have been tapped into.

Lori's Story: Making a Struggling Reader's Cognitive Processes Visible

Research and practical experience suggest that a child who continues to struggle to decode words over long term may become discouraged and thus give up before experiencing real success. If standardized test scores are a child's only measure of accomplishment, the fate of a longitudinal struggling reader may be further sealed.

In our teachers' meetings I had referred to Lori as my little "scruffy girl" with unruly hair. Lori's second grade reading progress scores showed she was reading on a low first grade level, lagging developmentally about one year behind her peers. Nevertheless, Lori possessed an insatiable desire to write; her "logic" could not be written down fast enough! However, neither she nor I could read coherently from her handwriting and I had judged her thinking to be haphazard and unordered.

One day I picked up one of many stories from Lori's Author Folder which she had worked on in class. With Lori at my side I typed word-by-word from her helter-skelter handwriting without changing word order, separated the words into sentences, spell-checked the phonetically-spelled words according what she claimed them to be, and punctuated to make a readable draft (see p. 125). Lori's eyes never left the computer monitor as I typed her words. I noticed that she repeatedly mouthed the spelling of a word I had typed as if trying to memorize it as she discovered a discrepancy between my typing and her pre-conceived conception of the word.

Lori's resultant story, *Learning to Talk* revealed an astonishing ability to apply sequential dialogue and high level thinking in her sentences. These advanced skills had not been apparent in her speaking. Careful analysis by Lori's reading intervention specialist of her handwritten copy verified that the typewritten words were indeed hers as she had written them. Additional implications about Lori's

potential might be revealed by further analysis by a language expert.

Lori's perception of authoring was more mature and well-developed than any of us had imagined. By employing a strategy of typing her hastily-scrawled story we gained empirical evidence of Lori's cognitive processes, and more importantly, *a valuable written piece from which Lori could practice decoding her own corrected words, which had previously been in her mind only phonetically.*

Lori shared this and many other stories with willing audiences through our TBks. Every student in the class including Lori earned a respected voice in the class authoring community. And, *the TBks provided peer pressure to cause Lori and others to stretch for language skills, conventions, and improved penmanship.*

Social reciprocity among Lori and her peers increased as the year progressed (Bandura, 1986). In April Lori's birthday fell on Easter. A classmate from outside Lori's immediate circle of "best" friends wrote a perceptive 3-page birthday letter addressing Lori as "*Dear Queen of Easter*" (see Rachelle's Story).

Lori in turn began sketching favorite pictures from science books to give to friends. The entire authoring community became caught up in creative intercommunications that circulated among students during recess and free times. The first half of Lori's story follows on the next page as an illustration of her cognitive processes. (Musings from my journal; story from the year-end book, May 2007.)

In June 2009, I had an opportunity to visit with Lori, her mother, and two of Lori's siblings and learned that many of Lori's special friendships from second grade (2006-2007) were still active despite students' assignments to different classrooms. Her mother suggested that Lori's second grade experiences had increased the students' capacities to read, write, and also to expand socially.

Lori, despite her struggle to decode words, could not have developed her higher thinking and problem-solving skills without quality literacy interactions at home which prepared her for learning at school on her developmental timetable (Hart & Risley, 1995). An aim of this study was to locate the essential elements of complex social events that triggered desirable learning processes to occur (Driscoll, 2000, p. 11; Eisner, 1991, p. 3).

Lori's story about learning to talk was handwritten in class so rapidly that it could only be decoded with careful analysis and added punctuation. Thus, her thought

processes were made visible, were revised and edited, performed at Author's Chair for a peer audience, and were judged by peers, teachers, and parents at home to be desirable (see Appendix A under *Desirable Learning Processes*). Yes, some scaffolding was required to make Lori's thinking visible, but as a result she achieved confidence to consider further learning (Johnston, 2004). A portion of one of Lori's hastily scrawled stories is typed on the following page (punctuation added and spelling corrected); Lori's friendship with Rachelle is explained next.

Learning to Talk (by Lori, November, 2006)

One spring evening I came into the world. It was April 8, 1999. My family gave me a taste of ice cream when I was only one day old!

My Mom almost named me Natalie or Brittney, then she named me Lori! My Mom was a nurse. I got a crib. My Mom was changing my diaper and singing, "You're my little Coochie-Foochie Face" from Chitty-Chitty Bang Bang. I tried to say I liked that song, but I could not talk yet!

The next day I could talk. I said, "Mama!"

They ran and found me! "Lori! You can talk!" Happily, they hugged me tight! I was so happy to talk! They said, "Say Mom."

I said, "Mama."

"Good!"

They said, "Say Dad."

"DA-DA."

"Good! Mom, Dad! She can talk and say your names!"

Mom and Dad rushed to the kitchen. "Say Mom," said Lisa.

"MAMA."

"Say Dad."

"DA-DA!"

Dad said, "Say Lori."

"ROL."

"No, Lori."

"Lollypop," I said. Dad and Mom and everybody laughed!

Everybody was still laughing. They did not stop until I said, "What? What did you say?"

Dad said, "Lori, say Lori."

"Lollypop is my name," I said.

Everybody said, "Lori, your name is NOT Lollypop. It is Lori. LORI."

"Loro," I said.

"No! No! No!"

"My name is Lollycue."

"No!"

"Lori is my name!" I said it!

"Say deer," they said.

"Deer."

"Say rein."

"Rein."

"Say reindeer."

"Reindeer."

Rachelle's Story: Effects of a Gifted and Talented Peer on Classmates

All students in TBk classrooms influenced their classmates and were influenced by classmates. The following account of Rachelle illustrates how reciprocal energy for

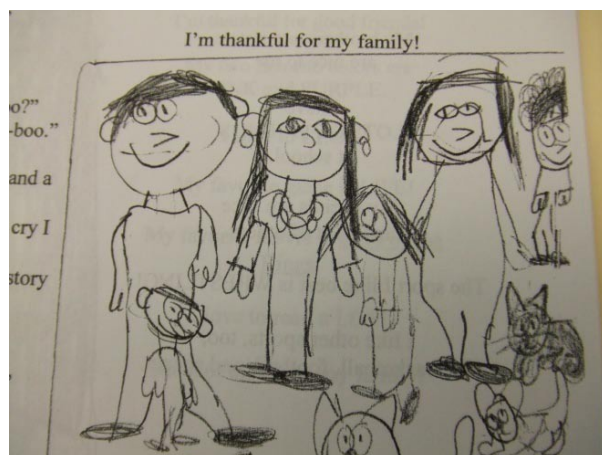


Figure 4-30. Drawing by Lori to illustrate her story (used by permission).

learning affected two students and an entire class. Rachelle was a gifted reader in the same classroom with Lori, whose story of struggling with reading was told previously. The girls had little to do with each other until late in the school year when Rachelle and Lori began to recognize the reciprocity for learning that had occurred between them. Of note, Rachelle also had one inseparable “best” friend, Dani.

Both Rachelle and Dani were gifted readers, were popular with their classmates, and both had entered kindergarten knowing how to read and write. By now their “word recognition” scores were off the charts—Rachelle scored around 7th grade level and her vocabulary and comprehension scores were on a 4th to 5th grade level. Then, what could TBks do for Rachelle?

Could TBks help Rachelle? According to my observations of Rachelle’s progress during second grade and the progress of Dani and other gifted students, the answer was a resounding *yes*. For example, in class Rachelle attended to details used by authors of children’s literature. For example, in planning her own stories for class publications Rachelle worked at including strands or repeating patterns through her plots as she had seen the authors of best-loved literature do.

After experiencing her first Author’s Chair, Rachelle’s work became even more complex. As she excelled and months passed, I became aware of a bi-weekly column in the local Morgan County News authored by Rachelle! Each column represented a kid’s view of some community event or timely interest (see comment at the close of this section by Rachelle’s mother). The words were unmistakably those of a second grade student, although a parent had most likely

guided the topics and structural elements.

Rachelle's frequent written communications at school included a 3-page birthday letter written to a classmate, Lori, whose birthday was on Easter that year (as mentioned in Lori's Story). A copy of Rachelle's original 3-page handwritten letter to Lori is in my possession. An unedited text copy is shown in Figure 4-31.

Rachelle's birthday letter to Lori was written during a 20-minute SSW session in class and was not an example of Rachelle's publishable work. However, this example demonstrates reciprocal energy that occurred routinely among peers in the classroom. No discrimination was evident in the authoring community between the works of struggling versus gifted authors (from my journal notes and class year-end book, May 2007)

The parents of both Rachelle and Lori evidently had a keen awareness of their responsibility for their own children's learning to read and write. Rachelle could not have achieved her early literacy skills without many positive language and literacy interactions

<p style="text-align: right;">April 8, 2007</p> <p>Dear Queen of Easter,</p> <p>For your birthday, you will get stuffed animals, real live animals, and animals stuffed we rice, and all kinds of animals, you might even get the Easter Bunny! You are a good artist, and really creative. And you are really good at caring for animals, and you have a wonderful imagination.</p> <p>You are a champion drawer. And you are helpful, a good citizen, fun to play with, a wonderful friend. You can climb like almost everywhere, you are careful, and most of all you are eight! Oh, and you were baptized, cause I love people who are baptized, I just love people that are baptized. And I love people that have a big imagination and that have a lot of expression, so that's why I love you! [In Utah culture it is common for children to be baptized at the age of eight.]</p> <p>You are a cute little sweet tooth, everybody likes your pictures and everybody wants to be your friend. That's why I chose you to be the Queen of Easter, you will make a wonderful Queen of Easter, you deserve it.</p> <p>Happy Birthday! Your friend, Rachelle</p>
--

Figure 4-31. Copy of Rachelle's handwritten letter to Lori, April 2007.

with her family. Rachelle is now in fifth grade. At my request, Rachelle's mother described long-term effects that have resulted from Rachelle's second grade experiences with TBks.

Rachelle [recall, name has been changed] likes to write stories, but has been shy about sharing them with others. By writing stories for the Traveling Books and working closely with others during the process she gained confidence to share her writing.

She received positive feedback from her parents, siblings, teacher & peers, which built excitement for the writing process and even led to working with friends on "extra-curricular" stories. Encouraged by her parents, she also wrote a couple of articles for the local newspaper. Because these activities were such a positive experience for her she continues to write stories today, many in collaboration with her sister. (From a personal e-mailed communication from Rachelle's mother, October 8, 2009).

Jon's Story: A Home Visit to Support a Nonresponding Parent

Learning from nonresponding parents how to help them in useful ways required that teachers communicate with them. Very few families required a follow-up phone call after receiving an extension of the due date. However, the families of Clayton, Kip, and Jon did require follow-up procedures, each resulting in similar patterns of improvement in each student's learning. In Mrs. Gale's second grade, most students had performed Author's Chair for their "*Baby Stories*." One child, however, did not have a story. Jon lived with his great-grandfather while his mother and grandmother were serving time in a state correctional facility. An account of Jon comes from my journal as follows.

Mrs. Gale had complained, "I don't think I'll ever be able to get a story from Jon,"

Hence I offered to call the great-grandfather (hereafter referred to as Jon's grandpa) to see if he had a photo of Jon when he was small. Mrs. Gale was

agreeable so I looked up the phone number.

Jon's grandpa responded to my question on the phone, "Well, um—we went to the zoo. I have a picture of Jon getting a drink from a fountain that looks like a lion's mouth. Anna and Katelyn went with us. Jon was older, maybe 3 or 4."

"That's fine," I said. "Would it be all right if I come to your home to help Jon write about your visit to the zoo for his class book?"

"Sure," he replied.

"Will this afternoon work for you?"

"Anytime."

"I could come at 6:00. Or if you prefer I could come in twenty minutes."

"Sure, twenty minutes is good."

I thanked him and said good-bye. By the time I arrived at Jon's home with my laptop computer the grandpa had found the photo. Jon sat on his grandpa's knee on the sofa and his uncle looked on as I seated myself next to them and turned on my computer. We talked about the photo. Jon responded to my questions, watching my computer screen with delight as I typed his spoken words. Jon and his grandpa described what the animals did at the park while their statements appeared in large bold font on my computer screen.

Jon paused in the middle of some of his statements to look carefully at a word and even mouthed the spelling of some words before finishing his sentence. He became more engaged and explained excitedly, "A hippopotamus splashed me! I was soaking wet! Then we went to McDonald's Play World and I went *fast and slippery* down the slides because I was still soaking wet!" His eyes never left the computer screen as I typed his exact words.

Together we read his story aloud and then I remarked, "Okay, now you need a satisfying ending."

Jon replied, "Finally we had a Happy Meal and then we went home."

"What a wonderful story you are writing!" I said, and then added, "Now—so that your readers will want to read your story—how do you want your opening sentence to go?"

Promptly he explained, "Well, my grandpa took us to the zoo, three of us cousins. There were three of us. Katelyn and Anna went with me." From this information we constructed an engaging opening sentence.

The next day I took Jon's printed story to class for him to work through revising and editing with the rest of his class. With some scaffolding, Jon added one or two salient details and then willingly re-wrote and illustrated his TBk page. I was not present to witness Jon's performance at Author's Chair, but Mrs. Gale reported that it went well. Although my scaffolding by taking dictation on the computer did not require Jon to work through the entire writing process, there was no question that he *owned* the finished story. (From my journal notes, October 2007)

The strategy I used with Jon of typing his dictated words demonstrates an important point common to inquiry-based learning; as the child watched with fascination his or her own preconceived word appearing on a computer screen, the typed word did not always match the child's prior conception of what the word should look like. I noticed that Jon paused to correct a prior misconception of a word several times before continuing on with his story.

Teachers may feel that home visits are a lot to ask of already-busy teachers. However, the most difficult aspect for us was the initial contact, and then very few home visits were actually required.

Assumptions and Ideology Behind Traveling Books

Two assumptions underlying this study are nontraditional in classrooms and potentially controversial. First, the teachers assumed that parents and teachers as partners are responsible for children's literacy learning. Parents did not necessarily know of this assumption about them and their roles, but the *teachers'* awareness of this assumption ultimately changed their sensitivity to the parents' critical roles in children's learning. This sensitivity then played out in teachers' understanding of ethnic diversity, student needs, and communication. As a result of the expectations for TBks, parents became

more proactive in the project and in due course students benefitted (see Figures 4-9 to 4-22).

Johnston (2004) would say that the teachers' talk tended to "position" parents in their roles. The teachers' aim was to provide guidance through TBks, which could be perceived by the parents as an "avenue of access" to their children's school literacy learning. In turn the parents "owned" something of their children's literacy instruction by contributing family knowledge to selected TBks. The teachers viewed this phenomenon of ownership as "placing parents in the driver's seat of their children's literacy learning." This assumption added a new challenge to the teacher's stewardship of involving a parent figure for each student in the TBk project.

As one might expect, teachers remained accountable for each child's instruction and learning as well as for framing the mechanisms and strategies employed in TBks. However, in our society, until the age of 18, parents have custody and responsibility for their children. Ultimately, it is the family—not just teachers—who will live with the consequences of whether a child learns to read and write. As parents may expect to communicate with their child's health care professional, parents may also expect to communicate with their child's *education* professional. This assumption recognizes that most parents are not educators just as most are not doctors, and that parents need guidance in knowing how to help their children. Mainly, I found that parents appreciated simple, purposeful access to the child's school literacy instruction (Shockley et al., 1995, p. 47) and guidance to contribute in straightforward ways. Trumbull and colleagues (2001) wrote, "Parents can serve as sources of cultural knowledge..., but schools need to

provide them mechanisms to do so” (p. 50).

My second key assumption for TBks was in the way the teachers perceived students. I assumed that if teachers recognized and addressed *all* students as authors and supported those who struggled as needed, the students would see themselves in the roles of authors among peer authors and would behave more like authors. This second assumption added another challenge to the teacher’s stewardship; that of scaffolding as needed to assure that *every* student *was* a successful author (see Finding 4 under *Strategies for Scaffolding*).

Teachers discussed a need to focus on respect for parents’ roles, or as Clay emphasized, to focus on the “partially correct” [the daily feats which parents accomplished] (Clay, 1993, as cited in Johnston, 2004, p. 13). The teachers’ two assumptions resulted in increased respect permeating TBk communications. Similarly, addressing students as authors changed students’ views about themselves and caused their writing behaviors to change. These phenomena reciprocated back to the teacher, whose role included cultivating community for authoring among students, parents, and peers. These two assumptions did result in increased reciprocal energy (Bandura, 1986) for literacy learning among students, parents, and peers. Specifically, teachers began to learn from diverse, unique parents and parents began to learn from teachers as partners.

Practical Significance of Findings

TBk projects began in two of the participant classrooms simply by circulating a bound stack of classmates’ writings to students’ homes for SREs. Sustainability of the

facilitations depended on the teachers' commitments to set aside an hour per week of instructional time for teaching the writing process (see Figure 4-6) and producing approximately one new TBk per month. Time constraints occasionally necessitated a shorter block of instructional time than the hour, but in the teachers' experience, students and teachers felt rushed in a consistently shortened block of instructional time.

Students were not typically motivated to write at the beginning of a school year. A teacher could expect to work at scaffolding struggling authors and establishing consistent writing routines during the first several weeks of school. Students' motivation and excitement to respond to TBk instruction would not seem apparent until after the children began to realize the power of the words they had written among their parents and peers (see Figure 4-31). Careful timing of TBk events resulted in increased reciprocal energy for learning. For example, struggling authors needed to see their more affluent peers' performing at "Author's Chair" in order to breathe new life into their own authoring so that they, too, could present their best work at Author's Chair.

Notably, it was the teacher who closed the gap between struggling and gifted peers in TBks by scaffolding struggling authors to succeed, as explained in Finding 4 and in *Stories from the Study*. Although from class to class the participating teachers followed similar sets of events, the details of teachers' projects were quite diverse. The challenge that TBks added to the teacher's workload was to involve a parent figure for each student in the TBk project. After the first couple of months the parents began carrying part of the teacher's load by helping their child proofread and edit family-based stories. It was felt that new teachers could begin TBk facilitation without a complete understanding of the

phenomena that could result. The model below represents a summary of reciprocal events observed in TBk facilitations.

The complete phenomena described in Figure 4-32 might not appear evident to new teachers until after TBks have been experienced for some time, perhaps for a year or more. In our failed struggle to find measurable standards to recognize the accomplishments of excellent teachers through TBks, two ideas emerged: First, students' progress reports to parents occurred automatically with the circulation of TBks to homes. That is, no additional work was required to reduce students' accomplishments to a numerical value. The child's class standing was evident in TBks. Second, a list of standards for *facilitating* TBks was beginning to evolve which enabled teachers to help

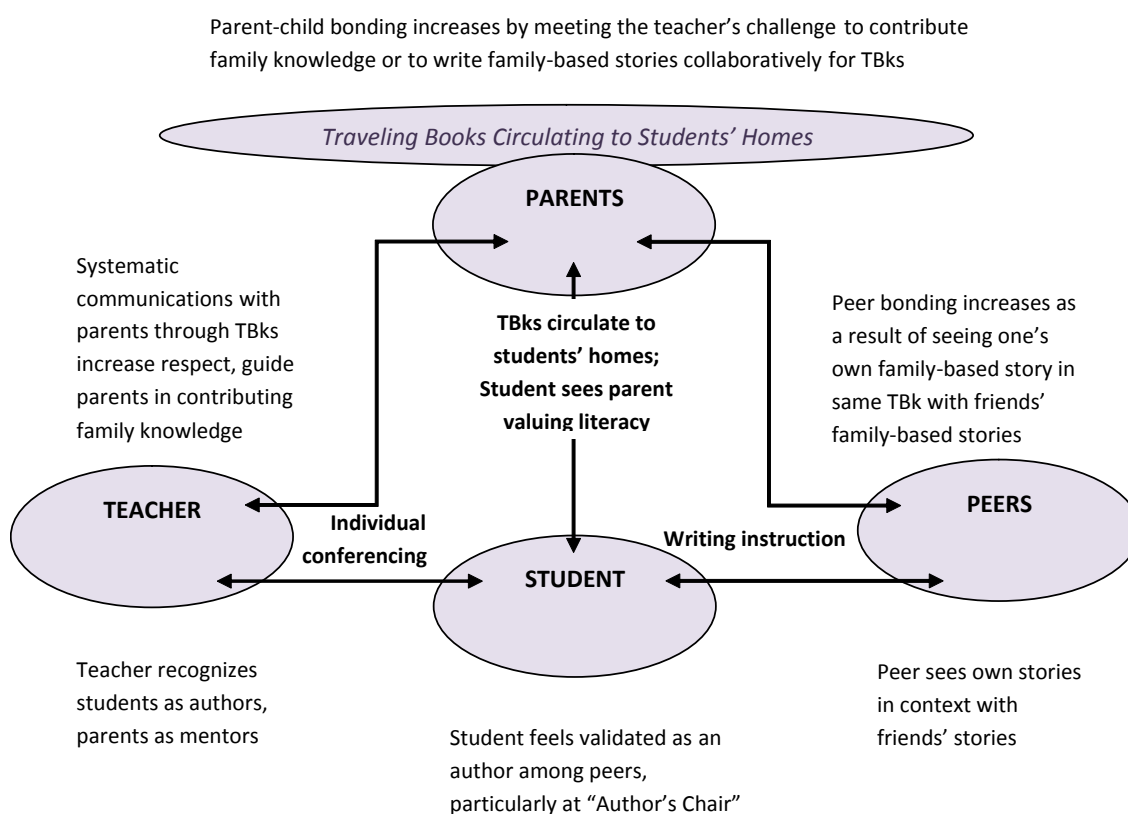


Figure 4-32. Affect and reciprocal energy evident in TBk environments.

each other with preparations year after year. By working together teachers were able to make the facilitations increasingly equitable, effective, and systematic for families. Despite creative differences, teachers' projects were ultimately conducted in the following order:

A Kindergarten Project: Basic Events

1. Teachers scheduled approximately 1 hour per week of instructional time.
2. Teachers set and practiced predictable classroom routines and expectations (see Finding 4: *Mrs. Stuart's Kindergarten Traveling Book Project*; see also *Strategies for Scaffolding Struggling Learners*).
3. Within the first 6 weeks of school, teachers completed and began circulating the first TBk to students' homes for SREs (see Figures 4-23 to 4-28).
4. The class completed approximately one new TBk each month until about March.
5. The teacher disassembled the TBks and compiled a year-end book of each student's writings.

A Second Grade Project: Basic Events

1. Prior to the opening of school, teachers sent a "Welcome Back to School" letter and "Input Form" to parents (see Figures 4-11 to 4-13 for examples).
2. Teachers scheduled approximately one hour per week of instructional time (see Figure 4-6).
3. Teachers set and practiced predictable classroom routines and expectations

(see Finding 4: *Mrs. Stuart's Kindergarten Traveling Book Project*; see also *Strategies for Scaffolding Struggling Learners*).

4. (Optional) Within the first 6 weeks of school, the first IHW rubric was sent home and completed, performed at Author's Chair, and began circulating to students' homes as a TBk (see Figures 4-15 to 4-20, see Figure 4-8 for a teacher's IHW task calendar).

5. Teachers aimed to have two or three TBks circulating to students' homes by mid-October, including an IHW TBk if possible.

6. The class added approximately one new TBk each month until about February or March.

7. Teachers disassembled the TBks and compiled a year-end book of each student's work.

The assumptions, theory, and philosophy embodied in these basic events became increasingly evident to the participating teachers through their commitment and experience of facilitation (see Figure 5-1 in Chapter V for the facilitation of TBks).

Conclusion

Findings of this study matched existing theory in the sense that all elements observed could be made to fit. In many cases existing theory helped raise new questions and suggest new facets for exploration. However, much of the research-based theory which this study drew upon was seldom found as part of traditional classroom practice, as described in Finding 1. A vast accumulation of literature substantiates the value of

cognitive experiences that are not constrained by a prescribed standards-based program. Cultivating communities is not a standards-based endeavor (Bandura, 1986; Bransford et al., 2000; Eisner, 1991; Epstein, 1995; Johnston, 2004; Shockley et al., 1995; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger et al., 2002). However, in the wake of the No Child Left Behind Act (2006), intellectual experiences such as authoring for TBks and other arts (dance, music, sports, and visual arts) have been marginalized from education's subsidized curriculum. Many educational researchers continue to struggle to find ways of evaluating nonstandardized cognitive accomplishments more equitably than with the rather rigid standardized tests of achievement.

This chapter lays out the details of what transpired in classrooms and homes, and how events were experienced by students, parents, and teachers as the TBk program was implemented. From these data points and distillations, five key findings emerged regarding TBks, including: (a) essential elements, (b) guidelines for Internet-assisted training, (c) a model for TBk pedagogy, (d) a prototype for IHW, and (e) an expanded educational philosophy (see Chapter V under *Key Findings*).

The Essence of TBks

The "soul" or essence of TBks is seen in the cognitive processes and interactive energy described in the stories of this study. It may be seen if, instead of making a bulletin board, a teacher chooses to make a TBk of students' writings and then circulate it to students' homes. A message on the front cover of the TBk could convey, "It is important for children to view themselves as authors." The parent and child would be invited to enjoy a SRE together occurring at a time of their choice in their home.

Simultaneously the teacher may choose to set aside an hour per week of instructional time for teaching the writing process, thus making time to scaffold struggling student authors and to involve a parent (or parent figure) at home for every child in TBks. Consequently, the teacher will have provided access for parents to their children's peer-based authoring environment, or in other words, placed the parent in the driver's seat of their children's literacy instruction through a peer-based TBk and established the child as an author. These steps precede the essence or "soul" of TBks.

Effects of TBks on Students

If the reader takes time to read the stories (particularly Mimi's, Clayton's, Lori's, and Rachelle's stories), an understanding can be gained of the complex, subtle, and profound effects TBks had on struggling, average, gifted, and former students and on entire classrooms of students. For example, *Rachelle's Story* was written from notes and artifacts from her second grade experiences. Rachelle would be considered a gifted and talented student and is now in fifth grade. At my request, Rachelle's mother described long-term effects that have resulted from Rachelle's second grade experiences with TBks.

Rachelle [recall, name has been changed] likes to write stories, but has been shy about sharing them with others. By writing stories for the Traveling Books and working closely with others during the process she gained confidence to share her writing.

She received positive feedback from her parents, siblings, teacher & peers, which built excitement for the writing process and even led to working with friends on "extra-curricular" stories. Encouraged by her parents, she also wrote a couple of articles for the local newspaper. Because these activities were such a positive experience for her she continues to write stories today, many in collaboration with her sister [who experienced TBks in Mrs. Gale's second grade when Rachelle was in third grade]. (From a personal e-mailed communication from Rachelle's mother, October 8, 2009).

The long-term effects of TBks on Rachelle were typical of findings reported in other stories and examples of former or struggling students, particularly of Lori [a struggling reader who was in Rachelle's class], Mimi, and Dusty. No adverse effects were reported by teachers or parents. In addition to the stories, *Finding 6, Survey Results* helped increase understanding of how parents perceived the effects TBks had on their children and of the struggles versus benefits parents experienced with TBks and IHW at home.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to study a sociocognitive “student/parent/peer authoring community” called Traveling Books (TBks) in kindergarten and second grade in a public elementary school setting. The aim was to locate the essential elements (inputs) that triggered learning processes to occur.

A review of the literature established that a student/parent/peer authoring community is not yet a theoretically unified position. Given that no research could be found to substantiate TBks per se, research and theory from the areas of human development, parent partnering, and learning theory combined to explain the rationale for TBk pedagogy. Two assumptions were confirmed in TBk practice: first, the teachers assumed that parents and teachers as partners were responsible for children’s literacy learning. Second, the teachers assumed that students whose thinking could be made visible should be recognized and addressed as authors. These two operating assumptions added two challenges to the teacher’s stewardship: first, the challenge of involving a parent figure for every student in the TBk project, and second, the commitment to scaffold struggling authors to help them represent themselves in each TBk. This commitment closed the performance gap between struggling authors and their more capable peers, recognizing that each was on a unique developmental level.

A qualitative design was employed in this study to accomplish its research goals and thereby add to the knowledge base regarding interactive literacy activities among home, school, and community. In a qualitative analysis, understanding of the phenomena

being examined emerges from the data. When a researcher conducts a qualitative evaluation, variables are not controlled. It is common for unplanned yet important themes to emerge during the investigation. Also, problems or obstacles may arise which complicate the study. Conclusions may distill after a period of extensive analysis. This inquiry incorporated the framework for Educational Criticism (Eisner, 1991), a methodology strongly influenced by Deweyan philosophy, to identify and evaluate the essential elements of a TBk project and to organize and appraise the data that related to each aspect of the research questions. The research questions were as follows.

1. What are the essential elements (inputs) that trigger desirable learning processes to occur in a TBk project, as experienced by kindergarten and second grade level students, parents, and teachers?
2. What theory supports teachers involving parents in TBk projects, and how can computer-based technology become part of that approach?

This chapter summarizes key findings of the study related to TBks and student/parent/peer authoring in educational practice. The chapter then addresses conclusions, and finally outlines recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Participants and My Role

A purposive sample of six Utah kindergarten and second grade public school teachers participated with their students in this study. The groups included one inner city second grade, four rural second grades, and one double-session kindergarten in a rural school district, making 12 groups of students over a 2½-year period (see Table 3-1). My role was researcher and participant-observer, spending 3 hours per week in classrooms during the period that data were gathered. My role prior to fall 2007 was that of a

participating teacher. Some existing data from that period were included in the study (see Table 3-1).

In this investigation, the objects of interest were the *stories* students wrote. About once a month the teacher compiled students' stories into a TBk and circulated it to students' homes for SREs. Certain of the stories were authored collaboratively by students and their parents at home, read to peer audiences at school, and compiled into another TBk. At the end of the school year, the TBks were taken apart. Each child's work was made into a year-end book for the child to keep. Thus, traveling books are defined as a literacy vehicle for increasing overlap of the child's spheres of influence, home, school, and community. Increasing overlap of the child's spheres of influence creates a greater likelihood that children will learn what the parents want them to learn (Epstein, 1995)

Reliability of the Educational Critic's Language

Structural corroboration, like the process of triangulation, is a means through which multiple types of data are related to each other to support or contradict the interpretation and evaluation of a state of affairs (Eisner, 1991, p. 110). The use of multiple types of data can foster credibility and aid in putting the pieces together to form a compelling whole, one that is believable. To strengthen trustworthiness of the study, ongoing member-checks, peer reviews, and consultations with parents as suggested by Eisner helped to ensure that my interpretation of the data was as the informants intended.

Seven stories from observations and interviews provided rich description of what transpired in TBk environments, how it transpired, and the effects it had on students.

Eisner (1991) described how we can know what confidence to place in a researcher's description, interpretation, and evaluation of classroom life through stories, as follows:

The problem of determining the reliability of the critic's language is addressed by judging the referential adequacy of what he has to say. This is done by empirically testing his remarks against the phenomena he attempts to describe. (Eisner, 1985, p. 114)

Subtle and complex effects of TBks on students were particularly described in the Stories. For example, the following data points from the stories fit with corroborating data and existing theory and can be tested by the referential adequacy of each point.

These data points from the study are as follows.

1. *The student's right to articulate language.* Mrs. Sanchez demonstrated respect for each student's ownership of language, making a practice of listening intently to each student who needed to talk about ideas—sometimes with her mouth open in animated amazement at what a child was saying. Mrs. Sanchez protected the student's right to articulate ideas and the right to choose whether to accept or reject suggestions made by student or teacher editors. As a result of students owning their own language and being acknowledged as authors, their writing behaviors increased (see *Critical Timing of Complex and Subtle Teaching Strategies*). In addition, Figure 4-8 illustrates the importance of timely events to motivate late-responding peers.

2. *Inquiry-based learning.* During independent writing after receiving instruction, students would frequently ask, "How do you spell this?" Or, "How did that author say that?" The students appeared motivated to learn the conventions to write. A key motivating factor may have been an element of peer pressure, or the students' desire to represent themselves well on a TBk page among the pages of peers. My observations

of students inquiring after skills to use in their TBk writings seem to support the claim that TBks can be used as tools to promote inquiry-based learning (see *Jon's Story*).

3. *Students overcoming prior misconceptions.* As children watched their own dictated words appearing on a computer screen as Jon and Lori did, or watched their words appear as trace-overs on paper as Clayton did, the written word did not always match the child's prior conception of what the word should look like. The student would pause to mouth a corrected spelling two or three times before continuing with the story. Repeated observations of students correcting their own mistakes through their efforts to write for TBks seemed referentially adequate to recognize TBks as tools to help students overcome prior misconceptions of written language (see Lori's story, Jon's story, Clayton's story).

4. *A teacher's use of influential language.* By their instructional language, the teachers positioned students as authors, positioned parents in the driver's seat of an aspect of their children's literacy learning through TBks, and positioned themselves in a supportive role. Parents and students responded by improving the quality and timeliness of their contributions, which increased the teacher's potential to involve a parent figure for each child in TBks (see Finding 1 under *Assumptions of TBk Ideology*). (See also a discussion on attending to the partially correct in the last paragraph of Finding 7 under *Internet-Assisted Training for Teachers involving Parents in TBks*.)

5. *"I'm not just a reader, I'm actually an author."* Students who were recognized and addressed as authors during instruction increased their writing behaviors and emulated more closely the works of professional authors. Furthermore, if the *teacher*

enjoyed and discussed literature from an author's perspective, students [as authors] were more cognitively engaged in the discussion. Mrs. Sanchez aptly described this phenomena as follows.

It's the whole idea of letting these kids have the freedom to ... make the paradigm shift of "I'm *not* just a reader. I'm actually an *Author*. So that changes how I, when I pick up a book, I'm...looking at it from an *author's* perspective. Like, 'How did they structure these sentences?' And 'How did they put this together?' And so I've engaged a lot more of my brain than just reading the words. Because I've engaged a lot more of my brain, I can internalize that, turn around, and *use* it as a *tool* to help me later on, like, 'Now, how did I do that?' Or 'How can I do that?' These ideas can come back in force, because *I* have gathered them as ideas. (From an audiotaped interview with M. Sanchez, September 10, 2008)

Eisner's evaluative methods can help researchers and instructional designers perceive and communicate the ideology and operating procedures of what is observed in TBk environments. This assistance in perceiving was my purpose for writing stories from the study.

Key Findings

This research led to five areas of focus for use in future research and development: (a) 12 essential elements, (b) guidelines for internet-assisted training for teachers and parents, (c) a model for TBk processes, (d) a prototype tool to engage parents in TBks through IHW, and (e) a clearer understanding of the educational philosophy behind TBks.

Essential Elements

Eisner's framework (1991) allowed distillation of 12 essential elements (inputs) that triggered learning processes to occur in a TBk project (see Figure 4-3). The essential

elements were identified in Eisner's five dimensions of schooling and listed as follows:

1. *Intentional dimension*: (1) Increasing overlap of the child's spheres of influence, home, school, and community through interactive literacy
2. *Structural dimension*: (2) Student-authored traveling books circulating to students' homes for SREs.
3. *Curricular dimension*: Curriculum consisting of (3) the child's prior experiences and family knowledge, (4) the school's literacy program, and (5) the writing process
4. *Pedagogical dimension*: Teachers (6) addressing students as authors, (7) enjoying literature, and (8) guiding students, parents, and peers through TBks
5. *Evaluative dimension*: Evaluating students through (9) individual conferencing, (10) using TBks as progress reports, (11) Author's Chair, and (12) the portfolio-type year-end book as a summative assessment

Guidelines for Internet-Assisted Training

In view of the pressures the teachers have described in meeting federal and state mandates for AYP, few if any new teachers are likely to facilitate TBks unless the teachers can see how TBks "increase the literacy mileage" of what teaches are already doing. Internet-assisted training for teachers and parents was suggested as part of this study (see Figure 4-5). Finding 7 is an exploration of considerations related to developing and using Internet-assisted training to help teachers involve parents in TBks.

A Model for TBk Pedagogy

The instructional model that emerged from this study is not a linear plan (see Figure 5-1). The processes of the model are flexible and intended to adapt to a teacher's current literacy program.

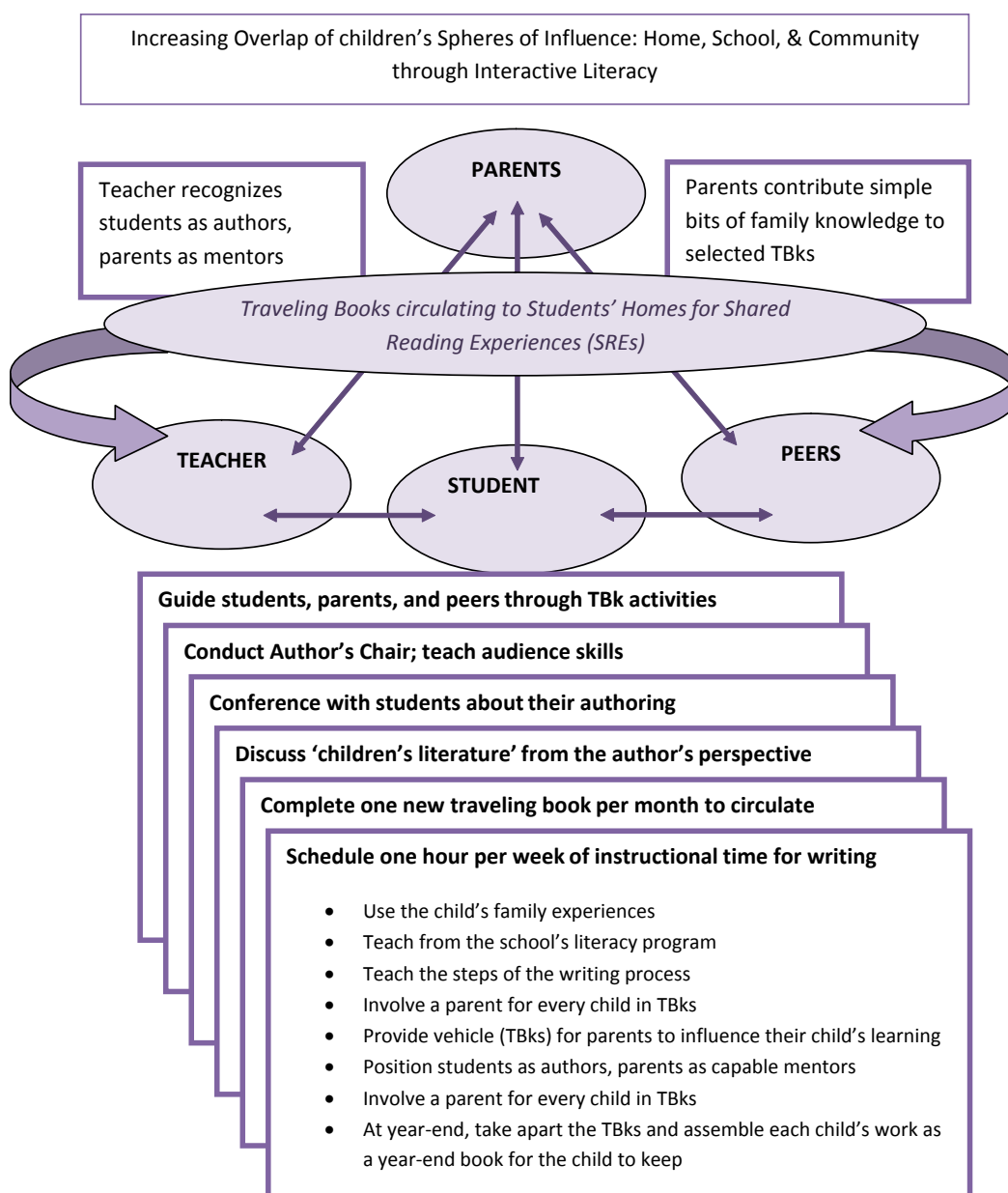


Figure 5-1. A model for TBk pedagogy.

Prototype for a Tool to Engage Parents in TBks through Interactive Home Writing

By following a simple rubric that students brought home, the students and parents authored a one-page family-based story for sharing at Author's Chair. Having their audience in mind while writing gave students and parents increased purpose in the writing. When bound, IHW resulted in "best-loved" TBks according to interview and survey results. IHW TBks resulted in increased overlap among the spheres: home, school, and community, and a greater sense of ownership by families than did TBks composed entirely in the school classroom. IHW had been useful in bringing about some of the essential elements, was considered a valuable tool that could be used to involve parents in making a TBk, and could be improved upon. However, effective TBks did not depend on IHW. In some localities, IHW may not have been an appropriate method for obtaining family knowledge. Family knowledge for TBks was also obtained for TBks through other means such as the "Input Form" (Figure 4-12) or by students supplying their own bits of family knowledge as was done in kindergarten. Therefore, IHW was not considered part of the TBk model or an essential element. However, IHW will likely continue as a valuable practice in connection with many TBk facilitations.

An Expanded Educational Philosophy

Two assumptions of this study increased the teachers' potential to manage partnerships with "a parent figure for every student" through TBks. Using TBks, teachers were able to position parents in the driver's seat of an aspect of their children's literacy learning. Similarly, at school, teachers positioned students as authors by recognizing and

addressing them as authors, which changed students' conceptions of themselves and increased their writing behaviors (Johnston, 2004). Energy for learning reciprocated through TBks among teachers, parents, students, peers, and back to teachers. Bandura (1977, 1986) described this phenomenon as social reciprocal energy, or the positive reciprocity among individuals within an environment as they interact socially, each lending to the other impetus for increased depth in the interaction. Accordingly, Johnston (2004) found that the ways in which teachers worded their communications tended to position students [and parents] in relation to what they were doing (p. 9). Thus, a pattern began to emerge in the data that indicated that what teachers assumed about parents and students affected the teachers' abilities to position parents as "capable" and students as "authors." The distillations of this study verified five statements to explain TBk ideology. The statements are explained in the following five subsections.

Parents and teachers are responsible for children's literacy learning. A teacher's philosophy affected the way teachers worked toward involving "a parent for every child in children's school literacy learning through TBks." Teachers' increased sensitivity to the needs of culturally diverse families resulted in expressed appreciation for the contributions parents made from multiple cultures and languages. Parents contributed small pieces of family knowledge to selected TBks through the *Input Form* at the beginning of the year (in a format ready for students to glue directly onto their TBk page), or through IHW, (in a format ready to compile in a TBk). These activities were systematic and not too demanding for busy families and teachers. In both the inner city and rural schools teachers learned from parents, the parents learned from teachers, and

students learned that their parents valued literacy learning.

Teachers' roles include involving a parent for every child in TBks. The participating teachers positioned themselves to communicate with all parents [or a parent figure for every student] as partners in TBks. One hundred percent of the rural parents did participate year after year.¹ TBks were the avenue that allowed parents a glimpse of their children's authoring beside peers and gave parents a taste of ownership in literacy instruction (see Figures 4-11 to 4-13 for the communications used with parents, and Figures 4-15 to 4-17 for IHW rubrics and follow-up notes). As a result of these communications and the resulting TBks, parents exhibited increased commitment to TBks.

Students are recognized and addressed as authors. Addressing students as authors originated from a teacher's search for strategies to meet students' needs after observing the handful of students in each class who struggled to write or who simply gave up trying, which ultimately left them with nothing to share. The participating teachers felt that no child should be left out of a TBk, and that scaffolding could be provided through appropriate questioning techniques (positioning the child in control of language) and then by strategizing to "get it all down" with the child's help. By exerting increased effort at the beginning of the school year to scaffold every child in expressing his or her thinking, students' motivation and writing behaviors increased. By the time a student had revised and finally shared a written piece at Author's Chair and during an

¹ More than 85% of the inner city parents and all students participated in their bi-lingual TBks. This group did not receive the same follow-up support that rural parents received. An empty space was left for non-responding inner city parents, some of whom decided to participate after the TBks circulated to their homes and they saw what other parents had written. Students regarded an empty space as a "memory" the family might someday choose to share.

SRE at home, s/he was as much an author as anyone in the class. The most successful participating teachers consistently recognized and addressed students as authors, particularly during writing instruction, and encouraged parents through TBks to do similarly. This practice appears to have changed the ways students perceived themselves and helped them to think about and discuss reading through author's eyes.

Peers lend purpose and motivation to what a child can and will write. Extant literature on parent partnering often focuses on home-school communications without mention of peer involvement. However, classroom observations and survey responses revealed a pattern that verified the essential nature of peer involvement in TBks. As an illustration, consider the child performing a feat on a sports playing field with peers, parents, and a coach present. The child will likely perform better when support from important others is evident. On the other hand, if one were to imagine the child performing a similar feat with only the parents present we would expect a reduced level of commitment and performance. It is easy to see the peers' role in motivating the child's "best" performance. A classroom is different from a playing field, but multiple types of data indicated that peers could be as essential to generating reciprocal energy for learning in classrooms as the peers were to inspiring a player's best performance on the playing field (see Lori's Story).

TBks are a vehicle for increasing overlap of the spheres. This study found that TBks can be an equitable, effective, and systematic tool for interactive literacy among students, parents, and peers. First, the teachers aimed to facilitate *equitable* TBks by leaving no child out, by involving at least one parent or parent figure for every child, and

by celebrating diverse family knowledge. Second, TBks were *effective* in helping every child establish an authoring identity, voice, and credibility among peers. Third, TBks were a *systematic* tool for carrying out structured authoring routines throughout a school year (see Finding 2). Although the first several weeks of facilitating TBks could be challenging, teachers reported that their workload became lighter and more enjoyable as students learned what to expect and parents and students assumed increased responsibility for literacy learning.

Key Differences Among TBks and Other Home-School Literacy Practices

TBks represented a change of pace from daily traditional homework. Students took TBks home only occasionally, perhaps once or twice a month. Dissimilar to students' usual daily home reading, TBks were authored by members of the contributing spheres, students, parents, and peers. Selected TBks contained family knowledge about the child together with information from peers' families. Increasing overlap of the spheres meant more than simply "mixing" or "sharing" some event or object among the spheres. Instead, as illustrated in several vignettes, students, parents, and peers each assumed a unique role in the overlap. Each sphere contributed something different to the whole (all the vignettes exemplify the distinct roles of students, parents, and peers: particularly Mimi's story, Lori's story, and Rachelle's story).

Implications of the Study

Opportunities to see TBks in practice are limited in today's standards-based

educational scene, unless educators can take a broader view of their role and see how TBks allows sharing of responsibility for children's education with the parents. The important feature of implementing the TBk project is the philosophy behind it; placing parents in the driver's seat of an aspect of their children's school literacy learning. Details of the program aside, this philosophy could and should make major differences in a child's learning over time. Considering that parents are the child's first teachers, a parent's opportunity to work with the teacher and contribute simple family knowledge to the child's peer-based learning environment can convey a common message across the child's spheres of influence about the value and purpose of education.

TBks may improve the risk factors in low SES families if children see their parents respecting and contributing to TBks and if parents see teachers' strategies for mentoring through TBks. In the rural schools that participated in this study, non-responding parents did contribute because of follow-up notes or through the teacher's personal request for simple family knowledge about their child, with advantageous results (see Clayton's story and Jon's story). Because many of the families involved have multiple children, the impact of this philosophy, if implemented widely in a school community, could be substantial. Similarly, for teachers really committed to the long-term progress of children in their classrooms, energizing the parents to fulfill an expanded role could have far-reaching consequences. The TBk project may be the tip of the iceberg in terms of student achievement, as facilitated by parental involvement.

Teachers described a two-fold commitment when facilitating TBks: (a) to scaffold every struggling student author and (b) to involve a parent for every child in

TBks. As families became acquainted with how TBks worked, some teachers reported a lighter overall workload than teaching without facilitating TBks. A comparison of TBks with traditional bulletin boards in classrooms, the study found that pages bound in a TBk and circulated to students' homes for SREs could provide more systematic, equitable, effective, and numerous literacy exposures than a bulletin board could. Yet, the task of making a TBk could require less time and effort than making a bulletin board of the students' written pages.

Recommendations

Much of the philosophy behind TBks is unknown outside the conventional wisdom in today's educational practice. Additional research is needed to understand how a teachers' paradigm affects the approach the teacher uses to position parents as key players in their children's school literacy learning. This philosophy is not to diminish the teacher's role in schooling, but to enhance parents' roles in simple ways and to enhance students' school achievement through TBks. Essentially this philosophy invites parents and students into a three-way partnership with teachers.

Experimental research could be used to determine how TBks correlate with academic achievement. To obtain experimental groups for a longitudinal study, dedicated participant teachers on sequential grade levels, perhaps kindergarten through fourth grade would need to receive training and then develop and facilitate their own TBk projects for the study. A first step to conducting the recommended research is to develop internet-assisted training for teachers and other stakeholders. Some of the questions to be

addressed for Internet-assisted training include, “What will entice educators to visit the site?” “How can the site persuade teachers to facilitate TBks?” “Will teachers be able to contribute to and interact with the site?” “What videos and other media should be incorporated?” Will the more impersonal training provided by Internet be effective with parents in real situations? Better still, can the internet-based training use the affordances of the computer to deliver attractive and compelling orientations, training, and ongoing performance support?

Because standards-based reporting is important in today’s educational support systems, future research is needed to determine and validate ways to preserve those valued educational experiences that are not easily standardized or compared on a school-wide or district-wide basis. For example, the writing process was not included among the basic literacy skills listed in the Reading First federal initiative (NCLB, 2006). Writing is not easily tested by standardized means. Yet, the skills needed to write *were* tested by standards (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and conventions such as sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling). Because a school’s testing procedures inform students, teachers, and the public of what counts (Eisner, 1999), high-stakes testing by itself could cause teachers to focus solely on “teaching to the test” instead of, for example, teaching through purposeful applications such as TBks the skills and literacy concepts which *are* easily standardized, but in more enduring, meaningful, memorable ways (see Dusty’s story for example).

Conclusion of This Study

One of the most important findings of both early and recent parent involvement research including this study is that the parents of disadvantaged and minority children can and do make a positive contribution to their children's achievement in school if they, the parents, receive guidance and encouragement in the types of parent involvement that can make a difference (Trumbull et al., 2001). Thus, the challenge to invite the involvement of "a parent for every child in TBks" could contribute in major ways to more effective educational practice.

Given the uncertain economical future that the current recession has delivered to our nation and our world, a major benefit of using family-based knowledge in a peer-based TBk environment was that TBks were self-made and sustainable without expensive curricular resources and were systematic, equitable, and effective. Students were motivated by TBk pedagogy, likely due to the finding that parents and students "owned" the language they used in the social contexts of TBks. Furthermore, students and parents assumed increased responsibility for revising and editing, having been given a standard of excellence in their hands in the form of a TBk. It is my hope that researchers, teachers, administrators, policy-makers and the public may move beyond dialoguing to actually experimenting with and further refining the TBk instructional model in educational practice and implementing TBk practice more widely.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Glossary of Terms

Acronyms used in this study –

AYP—Adequate Yearly Progress (see below)

IHW—Interactive Home Writing (see below)

MMOLE—Massively Multi-learner Online Learning Environment, a term coined for this study to consider the use of MMOG and MMORPG technology for teachers in the future to facilitate TBk online environments for schools, families and communities (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massively_multiplayer_online_role-playing_game)

NCLB—No Child Left Behind (see below)

PI—Parent Involvement at home in children’s schooling experiences

SPP—Student/Parent/Peer authoring community

SRE—Shared Reading Experience at home (see below)

SSW—Silent Sustained Writing in the classroom (see below)

TBks—Traveling books, or a TBk project: a student/parent/peer authoring community facilitated by a teacher

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)– A measurement defined by the United States federal No Child Left Behind Act that allows the U.S. Department of Education to determine how every public school and school district in the country is performing academically according to results on standardized tests. AYP has been identified as one of the sources of controversy surrounding George W. Bush administration’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Private schools do not have to make AYP, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adequate_Yearly_Progress, accessed May 25, 2009).

Absentee Parent– In lieu of parent support, school support is sometimes given for completing Interactive Home Writing (IHW) to construct a written piece from the child’s repertoire of home experiences for a peer audience. In this case it falls to teachers to protect the young authors’ sense of pride in his or her cultural background, and if possible, to employ a family member to review/edit the piece.

Appreciation- Eisner makes clear that Educational Criticism requires the art of appreciation. To appreciate a quality is not to say that one likes it, but to rather recognize it for what it is. He claims, “What is required (or desired [of an educational connoisseur]) is that our experience be complex, subtle, and informed.” The educational critic is capable of communicating what is appreciated (Eisner, 1991, p. 69).

“Author Talk” – Addressing students as authors, using metacognitive techniques (Bransford et al., 2001) at school to discuss how the authors of best loved literature performed their work (Graves, 1994).

Author’s Chair –performance in front of a peer audience of an author’s published work. Classroom expectations are set and practiced at the beginning of the year for active listening and appropriate audience behaviors (Graves, 1994, p 134). The author can be seated prominently or stand before classmates and the teacher can be stationed behind or beside the author. Teachers in this study found the following procedures effective for Author’s Chair:

The audience shows appreciation for the author’s work

The author calls on two or three students from the audience to make a comment, ask a question about a specific story detail, or even to share a brief “remembering” of something the author’s work has brought to mind

Final appreciation or applause signals closure; the teacher adds the new story to the class library or Traveling Book

Bandura— Social Reciprocal Energy: the positive reciprocity among individuals within an environment as they interact socially, each lending to the other impetus for increased depth in the interaction. (Bandura, 1977; 1986)

Basic Five – see Five Pillars

Best Practices Writing – A best practice is described as a continuum. Instead of throwing out the old and replacing it with the new, we simply change the emphasis, decreasing and gradually replacing things that don’t work and increasing things that do ("best practice" recommendations for writing instruction - Peha, 2003, accessed online 11/22/07 at http://www.ttms.org/best_practice/best_practice.htm).

Student Librarian – A daily class job for which a highly dependable student was appointed to check out TBks to classmates and then account for them the following morning. Some teachers employed an Assistant Librarian to deliver the TBks to the desks of the students who would take them home, and the following morning to assist with accounting for TBks.

Communities of Practice – See Wenger.

Conferencing – See Individual Conferencing.

Desirable learning processes: The term, desirable learning processes refers in this study to theory-based processes of learning (Bransford, et. al, 2001), which result in academic and affective benefits, as can be assessed qualitatively (Eisner, 1985, 1986).

Editing strategies –(see Strategies for Scaffolding...)

Eisner - Educational Criticism – Elliot Eisner’s qualitative research approach, educational criticism (1991), is a methodological lens to identify and appraise educational environments and performance. Dr. Eisner evaluates teaching and learning in terms of five dimensions of schooling (Eisner, 2001):

Intentional: what are the aims or goals of the program?

Structural: what are the time management, grading procedures, and spatial layout of the learning environment? [

Curricular: Is content purposive? Engaging? Cognitively challenging? Transferable?

Pedagogical: what cultural values are conveyed through the teacher? How is productive diversity promoted?

Evaluative: How well do evaluations help students to articulate their thinking? How is performance assessment complemented by the aims of the program? What are the consequences for learners of the testing procedures? How do evaluations support the school’s values?

Epstein’s Six Types of Parent Involvement – Dr. Epstein provides a framework of Six Types of Involvement and Sample Practices (1995) to help researchers locate their questions and results in ways that inform and improve practice, as follows: Type 1, Parenting education; Type 2, Communicating/Conferencing; Type 3, Volunteering; Type 4, Learning at Home; Type 5, Decision Making; and Type 6, Collaborating with Community. This study focuses on Epstein’s Type 4 Parent Involvement, “Learning at Home.”

Five Pillars of effective reading instruction, sometimes referred to as the “Basic Five,” as established by the National Reading Panel (NRP): (1) Phonemic awareness, (2) Phonics, (3) Fluency, (4) Vocabulary, and (5) Comprehension.

“**The Other five**” equally essential pillars as suggested by Richard Allington, past president of International Reading Association (IRA): (1) Access to choice and interesting texts, (2) Matching kids with appropriate texts, (3) Writing and reading as reciprocal skills, (4) Organizing classrooms to balance whole class teaching with small group and side-by-side instruction, and (5) Expert tutoring availability (Allington, 2004) <http://teachersread.net/pdf/FivePillars.pdf>

Home-school partnerships – a term used in literature for traditional parent involvement in children’s school experiences.

Individual Conferencing –During Silent Sustained Writing (SSW) while students write

independently, the teacher moves around the room conducting “2-minute” conferences: The teacher questions and then listens intently, guiding by questioning, the student’s sense of what he is trying to accomplish. The student will do 80% of the talking, i.e:

Teacher: What is your piece about, Andy?
 Andy: Well, it’s about this team that’s undefeated and they are...

The surrounding students will catch the teacher’s encouraging tone as s/he guides individuals, also making it easier for them to write” (Graves, 1994).

Interactive Home-Writing (IHW) – Writing co-authored, or collaboratively written, by the student and a parent or other family partner. The mechanism for IHW is adapted from Joyce Epstein’s TIPS (Teachers Involving Parents in School, 2001). Factors essential to successful IHW are listed by Trumbull, et. al (2001, p 51). Due-date reminders and other support communications are often involved.

Just in time instruction – an instructional technique in which the required knowledge and skills are imparted for immediate application, to avoid loss of retention due to a time gap (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/just-in-time-instruction.html>, accessed April 8, 2008).

Mechanisms for parent involvement – Invitations and guidelines provided by teachers to include parents in children’s specific schooling experiences. Trumbull et al. say, “Parents can serve as sources of cultural knowledge about the community [and child], but schools need to provide them mechanisms to do so” (2001, p. 51).

Mentoring Authorship – a technique used by teachers in TBk writing instruction. Students develop their own abilities as authors by noticing and replicating the work of authors. In a TBk environment, students are addressed as authors during “Literature Sharing” and at other times. Aspects of authoring may be discussed, such as evidences of the author’s plan, audience, purpose, genre, voice, opening sentence, satisfying ending, or repeating threads, strands, or patterns woven through the story.

National Reading Panel (NRP) – In 1997, Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the National Institutes of Health, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a national panel to assess the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach children to read. The NRP has completed the two-year research assessment of reading instruction approaches. The members no longer meet as a panel but continue to present the NRP findings at various conferences and organizational meetings. <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/>, accessed Nov. 13, 2007.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – NCLB is a recent federal legislation (another was Goals 2000) which enacts the theories of standards-based education reform, formerly known as outcome-based education, which is based on the belief that high expectations and setting of goals will result in success for all students.

Reading First –a federal initiative authorized by the amendments to Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The ultimate purpose of the Act is to ensure that all children read at grade level in English by the end of third grade.
<http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculuminstruct/reading/readingfirst/default.aspx>

Parallel Practices – A Home-School Partnership for extending Literacy Community, facilitated by two-way communication between the settings, where valid information, advice, and experience relevant to one setting are made available, on a continuing basis, to the other (Shockley, et. al, 1995, p 94).

Parent Involvement: Six Types – see Epstein

Reading First – see “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB)

Reciprocal energy – see “Social Reciprocal Energy”

“Remembering” – A term used by Ron Graves (1994) to teach the process of active listening during Author’s Chair. Graves teaches that the author’s piece should bring to the minds of peers their own prior experiences, or ‘Rememberings’ which can often be shared briefly (Graves, 1994, p 134).

Scaffolding – (also see “Strategies”) Teachers and parents can devise constructs to help bridge the gap to success for struggling learners. This process can be explained by Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978). ZPD is “the distance between the [child’s] actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.” Developing this concept allowed Vygotsky to examine “those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state” (p. 86).

Seels & Richey, 1994—Domains of Instructional Technology – Designing, developing, solving utilization concerns, managing, and evaluating the project are the five domains of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) that would be required for linking, for example, computer-based technology with TBk theory. Each domain is supported by growing bases of knowledge that complement the other domains.

Shared Reading Experiences (SREs) –Interactive reading, especially at home. Parents can receive mentoring or training from teachers and their mechanisms to encourage them in mentoring reading, asking intriguing questions, and to initiate discussion about the text.

Six Traits Writing – see Writing Process

Six Types of Parent Involvement – see Epstein

Spheres of Influence – Home, School, and Community (Epstein, 1995).

Social Reciprocal Energy – see Bandura

Strategies for Author's Chair – see Author's Chair

Strategies for making students' thinking visible – (For more detail see *Making Students' Thinking Visible*, p 114.) The teachers assumed that if a child's thinking could be represented as text, the child was indeed an author. Teachers recognized students as authors at all times and addressed them as authors particularly during TBk instruction. Teachers encouraged parents through TBks to do similarly.

Most teachers invented their own strategies. Some useful TBk strategies included interviewing a beginning author to produce an "as-told-to" (i.e., "Story by Maggie, as written by Mrs. Roberts"), "taking dictation," or "making trace-overs" (see "trace-overs" below). Such strategies resulted in "making students' thinking visible," a key concept of this study.

Strategies for scaffolding editing – (For more detail see *Scaffolding Beginning Authors* in Chapter IV, *Finding 4*.)

Mrs. Sanchez set up a three-tray system and taught students how to "partner-edit," or "edit two and get your own edited twice," or she sometimes asked leading students to act as "Editors." Mrs. Sanchez employed a reference code to enable student editors to mark a spot and then write their suggestions on a separate paper. Students could place their work in the top tray if they were willing to edit another child's work from the tray. Once edited, the editor's notes were clipped to the work and it was placed in the second tray to be edited by a second classmate and the student would take a different piece from that tray to edit. A twice-edited piece was placed in the third tray to be reviewed by the teacher and returned to the original author. This process was a stretch for many second graders but through it students gained an awareness of the editing process.

Students were reminded that *they* were the author of their own writing; they had the right to choose whether or not to use an editor's suggestions.

Student/Parent/Peer Authoring Community (SPP) –traveling book procedures.

Sustained Silent Writing (SSW) – A designated time period during school for students to write silently. Successful models of SSW typically allow students to select what they write about and choose whether or not to share it. The participating teachers initiated daily SSW by modeling a bit of their own writing on the chalkboard and then designating about 15 minutes for students to write on a similar or different topic. This was followed immediately by 2 or 3 students sharing something they had written. The assumption was that SSW encouraged high levels of thinking, provided opportunities to practice writing conventions, and resulted in better, more motivated writers and readers.

“Trace-overs”—A home-grown strategy for scaffolding a beginning author. “Trace-overs” were described in detail in Chapter iv under Clayton’s Story.

Traveling Book (TBk) – A TBk by itself is a compilation of writings authored by classmates, bound and circulated to the homes of students for “SREs” with families. Some TBks are created with parents participating as co-authors, or as contributing authors. These TBks can consist of family-based stories authored collaboratively at home by students and their families, shared at “author’s chair” for peer audiences at school, and then compiled and circulated to the homes of students for SREs. At the end of the year they are taken apart and each child’s work is compiled into a year-end book for that child to take home and keep.

Wenger et al. - Seven Principles for Cultivating Communities of Practice – “The goal of community design is to bring out the community’s own internal direction, character, and energy” (2002, p. 51). The principles we developed to do this focus on the dilemmas at the heart of designing communities of practice. What is the role of design for a “human institution” that is, by definition, natural, spontaneous, and self-directed? How do you guide such an institution to realize itself, to become “alive”? From our experience we have derived seven principles: (1) Design for evolution. (2) Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives. (3) Invite different levels of participation. (4) Develop both public and private community spaces. (5) Focus on value. (6) Combine familiarity and excitement. (7) Create a rhythm for the community.

These design principles are not recipes, but rather embody our understanding of how elements of design work together. They reveal the thinking behind a design. Making design principles explicit makes it possible to be more flexible and improvisational” (Wenger et al., 2002).

“Writing process” – a term that appears in the research of Janet Emig who published *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* in 1971. The term marks a shift from examining the products of writing to the composing process of writers. Generally the writing process is seen as consisting of five steps: pre-write, draft, revise, edit, and share/publish, not necessarily performed in any given order. Accessed online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writing_process, August 9, 2008.)

“Six traits writing,” on the other hand, has reference to commercial products for teaching the writing process. Each trait- ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation - is linked to the steps in the writing process; prewriting, drafting, responding/revising, editing, and publishing.

Appendix B

IRB Informed Consent Form and Parent Permission/Consent

Date: November 4, 2008

USU IRB Approved 11/25/2008

Approval terminates 11/24/2009

Protocol Number 2159

INFORMED CONSENT

Parents as Partners in Kindergarten and Second Grade Literacy Instruction: A Qualitative Inquiry into Student-Authored Traveling Books

Introduction/ Purpose: Professor Nick Eastmond in the Department of Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences at Utah State University is conducting a research study to find out more about how teachers and parents experience home-school interactive writing and reading activities using traveling books. You have been asked to take part because your child has participated in traveling book activities with his or her teacher and classmates. There will be approximately 172 participants at this site, and approximately 172 total participants in this research.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this education research study, the following will happen to you.

1. (Teachers) You may choose to allow the investigator to observe or participate in normal classroom literacy activities, including traveling book projects.
2. (Teachers, parents, or adult former students) You may be invited to take part in an audio-taped interview or focus group lasting up to 30 minutes. Your recall of specific details about the traveling books is not necessary; rather it is your views and insights that matter to this research.
3. (Teachers) You may consent to be video-taped in your normal daily teaching routine. The video will be member-checked by you to assure the information is presented as you intended. No identifiable image of students will be included in the video.
4. (Parents) A few pieces of exemplary student handwriting—authored at least two years prior to publication of the dissertation—may be selected to describe traveling books. If your child's handwriting is selected to be reproduced in the dissertation, your permission and accompanying student assent will be sought. Minimal identifiable information will be published, only with your consent.

Risks: Participation in this research involves no anticipated risks.

Benefits: There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from participating in the study. The investigator, however, may learn more about the needs of families and teachers in facilitating home-school writing and reading activities in the future.

Explanation and Offer to Answer Questions: Dorothy Little has explained this research

study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Professor Eastmond at 435-797- 2642.

Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence:
Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits.

Confidentiality: Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only the investigator and Dr. Nick Eastmond will have access to the data which will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a locked room. Non-exempt personal, identifiable information will be destroyed within a period of one year. You may request to member-check a transcript of your interview to insure that the information given was understood as you intended.

IRB Approval Statement: The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at USU has approved this research study. If you have any pertinent questions or concerns about your rights or a research-related injury, you may contact the IRB Administrator at (435) 797-0567. If you have a concern or complaint about the research and you would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Administrator to obtain information or to offer input.

Copy of consent: You have been given two copies of this Informed Consent. Please sign both copies and retain one copy for your files.

Investigator Statement: “I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered.”

Signature of PI & student or Co-PI:

Principal Investigator
(Telephone—435-797-2642)

Student Researcher
(Telephone—801-391-5111)

Signature of Participant: By signing below, I agree to participate.

Participant’s signature

Date

Parent's Permission and Child Assent

Description of exemplary student work pertaining to traveling books selected for use to describe the project in this research study:

Work to be used

This is a request for parent permission and child assent for the described work to be used in this research study:

Parent's Permission: By signing below, I give my permission for my child's work, described above, to be used in this research study.

Parent's signature

Date

Child Assent: I understand that my parent is aware of this research study and that permission has been given for my work to be used in the study. I understand that I do not have to sign, and that no one will be upset if I don't want my work to be used. By signing below, I give my permission for my work to be used.

Name

Date

Appendix C

Survey Instruments

CONTENTS

Second grade STUDENTS' survey

Rural second grade parents' survey

Inner city second grade parents' survey

Inner city second grade parents' survey: SPANISH version

Kindergarten parents' survey

SECOND GRADE STUDENT SURVEY (read aloud by the teacher, May, 2008)

1. Put a 1 next to your favorite traveling book.

_____ Ted E. Bear

_____ Memories

_____ Pets in Our Lives

_____ Interview with a Classmate

_____ Where the Wild Things Are News

_____ Our Baby Stories

_____ Our Family Adventure Stories

Put a 2 next to your 2nd choice.

Put a 3 next to your 3rd choice.

2. Each time you took home a traveling book, how much did your family like it? ~Circle one:

A Lot

A little bit

They didn't have time

3. Did your parents write something about the day you were born for our "Memories" traveling book?

Yes

No

If yes, how did you feel about having your parents' note in a class book for all your friends to read?

I liked it

I didn't care

I did NOT like it

4. Would you like your parents to write in traveling books again in the future?

Yes

Maybe

No

5. It takes a LOT of work to be an author! Would you like to write more traveling books with your friends in the future?

Yes

Maybe

No

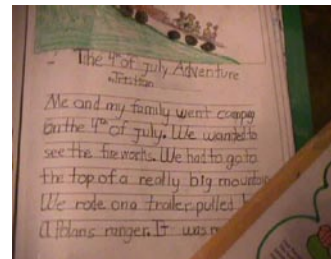
Survey for Parents:

Return to your child's teacher within 5 days

May 19, 2008

d/g

Dear Parent, Please take about ten minutes to complete this survey and then return it to your child's teacher. The questions are in regard to the traveling books that your child may have brought home during the school year as you remember them, similar to those pictured. Your voluntary response will be greatly appreciated.



- During this school year, which traveling books did your child seem to enjoy?
Rank the order of two or three that your child especially enjoyed:

_____ Fred E. Frog	_____ Where the Wild Things Are News
_____ Memories (with note from parent)	_____ Our Family Adventure Stories
_____ Pets in Our Lives	_____ Interview with a Classmate
_____ Year end book	_____ Our Baby Stories
- Each time your child brought a traveling book home, what was his or her level of interest in sharing it with you? *Circle one.*

<i>Highly interested</i>	<i>Moderately interested</i>	<i>Not interested</i>
--------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------
- If you would like to participate briefly 2 or 3 times per year in your child's school literacy work, how would you like the teacher to communicate with you about it?

<i>Note brought home</i>	<i>E-mail / Internet</i>	<i>Telephone call</i>	<i>Home visit</i>
--------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------
- Three times during this year your child brought home a writing assignment asking you to co-author a family story together. Describe the struggles versus benefits experienced:

Struggles:

Benefits:

- Which home-written story did your child seem to enjoy most?

_____ Pets in Our Lives	_____ Family Adventure Stories	_____ Baby Stories
-------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------

Why was this story particularly enjoyable?

6. Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective you felt traveling books were in terms of the following goals:

a. Promoting parent involvement in children's literacy experiences	Not effective 1	Somewhat effective 2	3	4	Very effective 5
b. Providing opportunities for children to see that their parents value literacy	Not effective 1	Somewhat effective 2	3	4	Very effective 5
c. Promoting involvement among friends in literacy experiences (i.e., reading friends' stories)	Not effective 1	Somewhat effective 2	3	4	Very effective 5
d. Sharing culture and human values with your child	Not effective 1	Somewhat effective 2	3	4	Very effective 5
e. Increasing your child's level of motivation for writing	Not effective 1	Somewhat effective 2	3	4	Very effective 5
f. Increasing your child's ability to read	Not effective 1	Somewhat effective 2	3	4	Very effective 5
g. Meeting your family's needs and time constraints (please comment below)	Not effective 1	Somewhat effective 2	3	4	Very effective 5

7. Your comments and suggestions:

8. About how many hours per week does your child read at home? _____

9. One last important question: If you could push a computer button to facilitate home-school literacy, what would you want to have happen when the button is pushed?

THANK YOU for completing this survey! Please return it to your child's teacher.

May 19, 2008

Dear Parent,

Please take about ten minutes to complete this survey and then return it to your child's teacher. The questions are in regard to the traveling books that your child may have brought home during the school year as you remember them, similar to those pictured. Your voluntary response will be greatly appreciated.

1. Which traveling books did your child seem to enjoy? Rank the order beginning with #1 as your child's most enjoyable.

- _____ **Fred E. Frog's Journal**
- _____ **Our Interviews with Friends**
- _____ **"Wild Things" News**
- _____ **Memories / Baby Stories**
- _____ **Year-End Book to keep**

2. When your child brought home a Traveling Book, what was his or her level of interest in sharing it with you? Circle one.

Highly interested Moderately interested Not interested

3. In September you may have written something about the day your child was born. Your note was placed in the traveling book, Memories, beside your child's work. How did your child feel about having your note in a class book? Circle one.

My child liked it My child didn't care My child did not like it

4. In the future, would you like more opportunities of this type to participate briefly in your child's school literacy work?

Yes No Maybe

5. If you would like to participate briefly 2 or 3 times per year in your child's school literacy work, how would you like the teacher to communicate with you about it?

Note brought home E-mail / Internet Telephone call Home visit

6. Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective you felt traveling books were in terms of the following goals:

a. Promoting parent involvement in children's literacy experiences	Not effective 1 2	Somewhat effective 3 4 5	Very effective
b. Providing opportunities for children to see that their parents value literacy	Not effective 1 2	Somewhat effective 3 4 5	Very effective
c. Promoting involvement among friends in literacy experiences (i.e., reading friends' stories)	Not effective 1 2	Somewhat effective 3 4 5	Very effective
d. Sharing culture and human values with your child	Not effective 1 2	Somewhat effective 3 4 5	Very effective
e. Increasing your child's level of motivation for writing	Not effective 1 2	Somewhat effective 3 4 5	Very effective
f. Increasing your child's ability to read	Not effective 1 2	Somewhat effective 3 4 5	Very effective
g. Meeting your family's needs and time constraints (please comment below)	Not effective 1 2	Somewhat effective 3 4 5	Very effective

7. Your comments and suggestions:

8. About how many hours per week does your child read at home? _____

9. One last important question: If you could push a computer button to facilitate home-school literacy, what would you want to have happen when the button is pushed?

THANK YOU for completing this survey! Please return it to your child's teacher.

Encuesta para los padres de familia: Favor de devolver esta encuesta al maestro de su alumno dentro de 5 días.

19 de mayo de 2008

Estimado padre de familia,

Favor de terminar esta encuesta y devolverla al maestro de su hijo(a). Las preguntas tratan de los libros de viaje o “traveling books” que su hijo(a) trajo a la casa durante el año académico, iguales a los de las imágenes más arriba. Agradeceremos su ayuda en este asunto.

1. ¿Cuáles de los libros de viaje le gustaban a su hijo(a) más?

Favor de clasificar los libros entre 1 y 5, 1 siendo el favorite

___ **Fred E. Frog’s Journal**

___ **Our Interviews with Classmates**

___ **Planning a Trip to Where the Wild Things Are**

___ **Memories / Baby Stories**

___ **Year-End Book to keep**

2. Cuando su hijo(a) trajo el libro de viaje a la casa, ¿cuál fue su nivel de interés? Favor de encerar su respuesta con un círculo.

Muy interesado(a)

Menos interesado(a)

No interés

3. En septiembre, es posible que usted escribió algo sobre el día en que nació su hijo(a). Coloquemos esta nota en el libro de viaje de su hijo que se llama “Memories,” a lado de los trabajos de su hijo(a). ¿Cómo sentía su hijo(a) sobre esta nota?

Le gustaba

No le dio importancia

No le gustó

4. En el futuro, ¿le gustaría tener usted más oportunidades de este tipo para que pueda participar más en las tareas de su hijo?

Sí

No

Quizás

5. Si quieren tener más de estas oportunidades, ¿cuál de estas maneras es la mejor opción para recibir más información sobre estas oportunidades?

Nota

Email/Internet

Llamada por teléfono

Visita a la casa

6. Favor de clasificar el rendimiento de los libros de viaje entre 1 y 5 para las siguientes metas:

a. Promover la participación de los padres en las experiencias de aprendizaje	No efectivo 1	Menos efectivo 2	Muy efectivo 3	Muy efectivo 4	Muy efectivo 5
b. Proveer oportunidades para los niños para que puedan ver que su padres creen que el aprendizaje es importante	No efectivo 1	Menos efectivo 2	Muy efectivo 3	Muy efectivo 4	Muy efectivo 5
c. Promover la participación entre amigos en las experiencias de aprendizaje (como, leyendo las historias de sus amigos)	No efectivo 1	Menos efectivo 2	Muy efectivo 3	Muy efectivo 4	Muy efectivo 5
d. Compartir la cultura y los valores con su hijo(a)	No efectivo 1	Menos efectivo 2	Muy efectivo 3	Muy efectivo 4	Muy efectivo 5
e. Aumentar el nivel de motivación de su hijo para escribir	No efectivo 1	Menos efectivo 2	Muy efectivo 3	Muy efectivo 4	Muy efectivo 5
f. Mejorar la capacidad de leer de su hijo(a)	No efectivo 1	Menos efectivo 2	Muy efectivo 3	Muy efectivo 4	Muy efectivo 5
g. Cumplir con las necesidades de las familias (favor de proveer sus comentarios más abajo)	No efectivo 1	Menos efectivo 2	Muy efectivo 3	Muy efectivo 4	Muy efectivo 5

7. Sus sugerencias y comentarios:

8. ¿Cuántas horas lee su hijo(a) mayormente en la casa? _____

9. Otra pregunta muy importante: Si fuera posible oprimir un botón para facilitar el aprendizaje de la lectura entre la casa y escuela, ¿que le gustaría a usted que sucediera después de oprimir el botón?

¡GRACIAS por terminar esta encuesta! Favor de devolverla al maestro de su hijo(a).

Survey for Kindergarten Parents: Return to your child's teacher within 5 days

April 30, 2008

Dear Parent,

Please take about fifteen minutes to complete this survey and then mail it in the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope. The questions below are in regard to the traveling books that your child brought home from kindergarten a year ago, as you remember them—similar to those pictured above. You may remember that your child helped to author the traveling books with his or her kindergarten class as a home-school literacy activity. Your voluntary response will be greatly appreciated.

1. Do you recall a traveling book that your child seemed to enjoy during his or her kindergarten school year? Indicate 2 or 3 of your child's more enjoyable choices:

- ☐ **October - I like...**
- ☐ **November - I Am Thankful For...**
- ☐ **December - I Want to Give...**
- ☐ **January - If it Snowed I Would...**
- ☐ **February - Love is...**
- ☐ **March - If I were a Kite...**
- ☐ **April - My Dad Likes...**
- ☐ **Year-End Book of your child's stories**

2. When your child brought a Traveling Book home during the year, what was his or her level of interest in sharing it with you? — Circle one.

Highly interested Moderately interested Not interested

3. While your child had a traveling book at home, did s/he notice pages that were made by classmates as well as noticing his/her own page? — Circle one.

Yes, and talked about them Yes, but didn't talk about them No, not interested

4. What other literacy activities do you and your child normally participate in together? Indicate all that apply

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk about the stories you read | <input type="checkbox"/> Make up new stories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write notes to each other | <input type="checkbox"/> Practice word cards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit with each other at dinnertime | <input type="checkbox"/> Make pictures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read labels, shopping lists, road signs, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain) |

5. Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective you felt the traveling books were in terms of:

a. Promoting parent involvement in children's literacy experiences	Not effective effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very 5
b. Providing opportunities for children to see that their parents value literacy	Not effective effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very 5
c. Promoting involvement among friends (i.e., reading friends' stories)	Not effective effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very 5
d. Sharing culture and human values with your child	Not effective effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very 5
e. Increasing your child's level of motivation for writing	Not effective effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very 5
f. Increasing your child's ability to read	Not effective effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very 5
g. Meeting your family's needs and time constraints (please comment below)	Not effective effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very 5

6. Your comments and suggestions:

7. One last important question: If you could push a computer button to facilitate home-school literacy for your child, what would you want to have happen when the button is pushed?

THANK YOU for completing this survey! Please mail it in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Appendix D

Survey Results and Analysis

Students' Survey Results and Analysis

The students responded to a year-end survey of five questions (see Student's Survey Instrument in Appendix C). The teachers read the survey aloud as the students marked their answer choices. For each question, the tables below show results for the rural groups on the left side, and results for the urban group on the right side of each table. The term, "urban" is used instead of the term, "inner city" to facilitate the reporting of the data in tables.

Table D-1

Question 1: Student's Preferred TBk

Rural: 7 answer choices	PI	Preferred Title	Urban: 4 answer choices	PI	Preferred Title
Ted E. Bear's Journal	Moderate	33%	Fred E. Frog's Journal	Moderate	29%
Pets in our lives	Complex	22%			
Wild things newsletter	Simple	14%	Wild things news	Simple	20%
Family adventures	Complex	13%			
Interview with a classmate	Simple	12%	Interview with a classmate	Simple	21%
Our baby stories	Complex	6%			
Memories/note from home	Moderate	6%	Memories/note from home	Moderate	30%

Results for question 1 show that a majority of both urban and rural students preferred TBk titles that required the highest levels of parent involvement. This finding is not readily discernable until one considers that the highest PI level available to each population received the highest percentage as a preferred title for that group. This data suggests that the urban students experienced TBks similarly to the way the rural students experienced them, although the urban students experienced fewer TBks. In both

populations, responses to question 1 were weighted to aid the analysis as follows: First choice = 3 pts. Second choice = 2 pts. Third choice = 1 pt. Any others = 0 pts.

The second question, shown in Table D-2, asks how much the students thought their families liked the TBks or whether the family did not have time for TBks.

Table D-2

Question 2: Each Time You Took a TBk Home, How Much Did Your Family Like It?

Answer choices	Rural	Urban
A lot	54%	70%
A little bit	26%	0%
They did not have time	20%	30%

Inner city students seemed confused on how to answer question 3. When asked how they liked having their parents' note in a TBk, 75% of urban students responded that their parents had not written a note when in fact, over 60% of their parents had written notes. Results are shown in Table D-3 with comments following.

Table D-3

Question 3: How Did You Feel About Having Your Parent's Note in a TBk for Your Friends to Read?

Rural answer choices	Rural	Urban answer choices	Urban
I liked it	71%	I liked it	25%
I didn't care either way	24%	I didn't care either way	0%
I did NOT like it	5%	I did NOT like it	0%
		They didn't write	75%

While the urban students were doing this survey some went back and changed answers as they progressed through this part, indicating that they may have forgotten the activity. Students might have understood better had the teacher shown a sample of a TBk that contained parents' notes from the "Input Form." Question 4 hinges on Question 3. Results have low validity, but can be interpreted to indicate that students generally favored the TBk activities (see Table D-4).

Table D-4

Question 4: Would You Like Your Parents to Write in TBks Again in the Future?

Answer choices	Rural	Urban
Yes	55%	30%
Maybe	31%	50%
No	14%	20%

Results of question 5 show that 86% of rural and 81% of urban students would like to write TBks with their friends again in the future. My conclusion from the students' survey, taken at a poor time as students were completing an arduous 8-week review of the writing process and had not yet performed at Author's Chair or published, is that the students did enjoy the TBks, and most were willing to work hard to have them.

Table D-5

Question 5: It Takes A LOT of Work to be an Author! Would You Like to Write More Traveling Books With Your Friends in the Future?

Answer choices	Rural	Inner city
Yes	55%	52%
Maybe	31%	29%
No	14%	19%

Parents' Survey Results and Analysis

The teachers achieved 100% parent involvement (PI) in the rural groups and over 85 % PI in the urban group. However, the teachers wanted to learn how the parents had experienced TBks at home. The survey questions were designed and sent home during the final weeks of school in the groups shown in Table 3-1. Sixty-five percent of the 127 surveys were returned in a stamped, addressed envelope or returned in person. Responses to several of the survey questions contributed valuable findings to this study.

The purpose of the first question was to determine how parents would rate simple or moderate PI TBks compared to high PI TBks with no designation shown on the survey form. To aid the analysis of results, I had previously categorized the TBk titles according to the amount of parents' time that was required for each (see Table 3-4). I analyzed the responses in separate groups due to variables among the groups, as explained following each table. Responses were weighted to assign 3 points to the title chosen as "most enjoyed," 2 points to 2nd choice, 1 point to 3rd choice, and 0 points to all others. The inner city group did not attempt complex PI literacy activities (see Table D-6).

Table D-6

Simple Rubric in Two Languages: Preferred PI level (Urban Group 1)

No. of TBks	Total pts.	Mod. PI pts.	Mod. PI %	Simple PI pts.	Simple PI %
5	44	32	73%	12	27%

Question 1

Inner city titles included:

<i>Fred E. Frog's Journal</i>	<i>(Moderate PI)</i>
<i>Our Interviews with Classmates</i>	<i>(Simple PI see Figure 4-22)</i>
<i>Our Trip to Where the Wild Things Are</i>	<i>(Simple PI, see Figure 4-23)</i>
<i>Our Memories</i>	<i>(Moderate PI)</i>

Seventy-three percent of parents from the inner city school selected TBks that required a higher amount of parent involvement as their child's preferred titles, either "Fred E. Frog's Journal" or "Our Memories." Only 27% selected simple PI titles as their child's preferred titles. This was surprising because I had thought these parents would favor the title, *Our Trip to Where the Wild Things Are*. Mrs. Barker and I thought this group had produced the best "Wild Things" TBk that I had seen and they had quite obviously enjoyed composing it together.

Groups 2 and 4 indicated a preference for the TBks that called for the highest levels of parent involvement at home. Of three choices, 50% of the parents in Table D-7 indicated high PI TBks as their children's preferred titles, 36% indicated moderate PI titles, and 15% selected simple PI as most preferred.

Table D-7

Simple Rubric and Preferred PI Level (Groups 2 and 4)

Group	No. of TBks	Total pts.	High PI	High PI %	Mod. PI	Mod. PI %	Simple PI pts.	Simple PI %
#2	8	78	41	53%	29	35%	12	12%
#4	8	75	35	47%	47	36%	13	17%
				50%		36%		15%

Group 3, using a “concept-rich” IHW rubric (see Appendix H), showed a preference for moderate PI over complex PI. Table D-8 above substantiates other evidence that although the concept-rich rubric had been intended as an aid for parents, the parents did not favor it. Of group 3, only 22% preferred titles that were associated with complex PI. Forty-eight percent preferred moderate PI titles, and 30% preferred simple PI titles. The complex PI rubric was designed for second grade from the TIPS prototype model for Interactive Homework (Epstein et al., 2001; see Appendix H).

Table D-8

Concept-Rich Rubric and Preferred PI Level (Group 3)

No. of TBks	Total pts.	High PI	High %	Mod PI	Mod %	Simple PI pts.	Simple%
8	61	14	22	29	48	18	30

I concluded from the results of question one that most parents and students approved of IHW assignments and preferred the simple rubric (see Appendix H). This finding increased our confidence to sponsor IHW TBks in the future and increased our understanding of ways to improve and increase parent involvement in students’ learning by eliciting family-based knowledge from parents to use in classroom authoring communities.

Question Two

This question asked, “Each time your child brought a traveling book home, what was his or her level of interest in sharing it with you?” Circle one.

Highly interested

Moderately interested

Not interested

Table D-9

Child's Interest in Sharing Traveling Books at Home

Group #	Child highly interested	Child moderately interested	Child not interested	Total responding	% responding	Population
#1	10	1	0	11/22	50	Urban
#2	4	10	0	14/24	58	Rural 2nd
#3	7	4	0	11/23	48	Rural 2nd
#4	8	2	1	11/23	48	Rural 2nd
#5	13	5	0	18/22	81	Rural K
#6	23	7	1	31/32	97	Rural K
Ave	10.8	4.8	.25	16/24	65	
%	67	31	2			TOTAL

Results of question 2 indicate that at least 67% of the students were highly interested in sharing a TBk at home, 31% were moderately interested, and 2% were not interested. However, Group 2 appears somewhat an outlier. If Group 2 were removed from the analysis, 75% of students were highly interested, as opposed to 67%. This difference can be explained since at least half of the TBks compiled by Group 2 were never circulated to students' homes, and those circulated were only circulated to the homes of students who requested them. One of the parents of this group responded that they had never seen a TBk come home. Others had seen only one or two. The teacher of this group had been working on other priorities and had not employed the routines that could have carried the project forward. However, this was the group that Mimi was in (see Mimi's Story), indicating that despite limitations, at least one and likely other students and their parents were positively influenced by the classroom TBk instruction.

Question Three (Kindergarten Students Only)

While your child had a traveling book at home, did s/he notice the pages that were made by classmates, as well as noticing his/her own page?

Of 48 responses, 46 indicated that their child was indeed interested in classmates' pages (see Table D-10), further verifying that 'peers' are an essential element of TBk

Table D-10

Level of Interest Shown in Classmates' Pages

K	Responding	Yes, and talked about them	Yes, but didn't talk about them	No, not interested
2006-07	17/22	15	2	0
2007-08	31/32	27	2	2
%		88	11	.06

projects. Under this question, many parents commented about what they, the parents, had observed, as follows.

He especially liked talking about his friend's pictures

My child loved to show me her page and those pages her friends made and why they made them.

It was fun to see the children's perspectives.

He was excited

Many times my child was more interested in what friends wrote

Wanted family to see his page, but talked about all peers as well.

He thought it was funny to read classmate's responses.

She loved sharing the ideas she had as well as her friends.

Loved to see her and her friends' pictures.

I was interested in what he said about each child & their page as well. He knows these children well.

It helped him recognize their names too.

He is excited to read his friends names & recognized who wrote it.

She loved to talk about her friends and her pictures.

My daughter knows and is opinionated about who are good artists in her class, & who needs some work. She wanted me to read the whole book, not just skip to her page.

My child liked the Memories TBk very much and wanted a copy of the book.

Not interested:

[No, not interested in peer pages] He is never really sure who is who in his class.

[No, not interested in peer pages] She was excited to show us her page.

Question Four

Did you notice any difference in your child's attitude about literacy learning while sharing TBks with you?

Table D-11 indicates that 72% of the parents perceived TBks as a motivational mechanism for literacy learning.

Table D-11

Students' Motivation for Literacy Learning

K	Responding	Sharing TBks appeared to INCREASE my child's motivation for literacy learning:		Sharing TBks appeared to make NO DIFFERENCE to my child's motivation for literacy learning:	
			%		%
2006-07	19	12	63	7 votes	36
2007-08	27	21	77	6 votes	22
TOTAL	46	33	72	13	28

Question Five (Urban Students Only)

This question asked, “Would you like more opportunities of this type to participate briefly in your child’s school literacy work?”

Yes

No

Maybe

This 100% affirmative result from responding inner city parents indicates a willingness to participate in bilingual TBk activities (see Table D-12). This result assumes that 100% parent involvement in TBks in this population is possible with bilingual support for parents, equitable with the support that rural non-responding parents received.

Table D-12

Do Urban Parents Want More Opportunities of This Type?

Group#	Yes	No	Maybe	Responding	%	% Affirmative
#1	11	0	0	11/22	50	100

Question Six: Effectiveness of Traveling Books in terms of Seven Goals

The teachers designed the next seven questions from Eisner’s dimensions of schooling to explore parents’ perspectives of TBks. The questions were answered on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with “1” being least effective and “5” most effective. Parents’ responses from all six participating groups were analyzed together. The introduction to the seven questions stated, “Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective you felt traveling books were in terms of the following goals.”

Part A (Rate how effective you felt traveling books were in terms of):

a. Promoting your involvement in your child's literacy experiences	Not effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very effective 5
TOTAL RESPONSES (6 groups, 52% return)	0	4	4	27	51

90% indicated Very effective (5), or Effective (4)

5% indicated the middle value (3)

5% indicated (1) or (2), Not effective

Part B: (Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective you felt traveling books were in terms of):

b. Providing opportunities for your child to see parents valuing literacy	Not effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very effective 5
Total responses (6 groups, 52% return)	0	6	13	26	41

78% indicated Very effective (5), or Effective (4)

15% indicated the middle value (3)

7% indicated (1) or (2), Not effective

Part C

(Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective you felt traveling books were in terms of):

c. Promoting literacy among your child's peers	Not effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very effective 5
Total responses (6 groups, 52% return)	1	0	12	25	48

85% indicated Very effective (5), or Effective (4)

14% indicated the middle value (3)

1% indicated (1) or (2), Not effective

Part D

(Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective you felt traveling books were in terms of):

d. Talking about culture and human values with your child	Not effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very effective 5
Total responses (6 groups, 52% return)	1	8	24	20	33

62% indicated Very effective (5), or Effective (4)

28% indicated the middle value (3)

10% indicated (1) or (2), Not effective

Part E

(Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective you felt traveling books were in terms of):

e. Increasing your child's motivation for writing	Not effective 1	2	Somewhat effective 3	4	Very effective 5
Total responses (6 groups, 47% return)	2	7	17	19	33

66% indicated Very effective (5), or Effective (4)

22% indicated the middle value (3)

12% indicated (1) or (2), Not effective

(figure continued)

Figure D-1. Effectiveness of traveling books in terms of seven goals.

Part F (on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective were traveling books were in terms of):

f. Increasing your child's ability to read	Not effective	Somewhat effective		Very effective	
	1	2	3	4	5
Total responses (6 groups, 52% return)	2	7	16	20	41

71% indicated Very effective (5), or Effective (4)

19% indicated the middle value (3)

10% indicated (1) or (2), Not effective

Part G (rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how effective traveling books were in terms of):

g. Meeting your family's needs and time constraints (please comment below)	Not effective	Somewhat effective		Very effective	
	1	2	3	4	5
Total responses (6 groups, 50% return)	3	3	18	26	34

71% indicated Very effective (5), or Effective (4)

22% indicated the middle value (3)

7% indicated (1) or (2), Not effective

Results for the seven parts of question 6 indicated that although most parents perceived TBks as meeting their family's' needs, there is a small percentage of parents who perceived TBks as not meeting their needs in given areas. These areas provide a focal point for further research to improve TBk pedagogy.

It can be concluded from the seven parts of question 6 that the majority of the parents felt that TBks were effective in all the aspects.

Question Seven

If you could push a button to facilitate home-school literacy... what would you want to have happen when the button is pushed? A random sampling of parents' responses includes the following.

Not sure

[I would have] children and parents involved in literacy, reading with their child

Same effect as "starfall" [starfall.com]

To be able to know what level a child should be at a certain age, and how to know if they're there

All distractions need to disappear!

Anything that makes it fun and interactive

Simply would need more time in the day for more reading

Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol for PARENTS

Materials: Audio tape recorder, protocol & pencil

Optional: TBks, IHW rubrics (simple and content-rich), "Input Form"

Static Questions:

Group # _____

(Obtain information from teacher) Interviewee's child# _____ Boy Girl

Home language: English Spanish other

Reading level: 3.5 or above Average 1.5 or below

Class Citizenship: Excellent Average Requires support

Interviewee initials _____ Male Female

Single w _____ dependant(s) Married w _____ dependant(s) Guardian w _____ dependant(s)

Semi-structured Interview: Welcome/introductions

Purpose – Interview about home-school literacy activities and traveling books (TBks)

Informed Consent signature Suggest a timeframe (20 – 30 minutes)

1. We're going to talk about how you experience home-school literacy activities and traveling books. Do you recall a time that your child brought home a traveling book? What was your first impression? (TBks can be shown)

(Probe Qs)

Describe your child looking at a TBk.

Talk about your child noticing his/her own page?

Were friends' pages noticed? Some friends more than others?

2. Two or three times during the year, you helped your child write a Family-Based Story... (Pets in Our Lives, Our Baby Stories, or Family Adventure Stories)

What do you remember about the home writing assignments?

How did your family experience the Home Writing assignment?

(Probe Qs) What happened?

Talk about the rubric (show simple vs. concept-rich rubric, see Appendix G)

How much instructional detail with the writing rubric did you prefer...

(a) More instructional detail on the rubric? Or (b) Less instructional detail?

(Probe Qs)

Your first impression of the assignment when it came home...

How did your child react?

How did you react?

How much did your child become involved with the assignment?

How much did your child watch as you worked on the assignment?

Could you say s/he benefited from your "mentoring" the value of writing? (a) Yes (b) No

How did your child seem to feel about the story after it was finished? Could you say your child felt: (a) “ownership” of the final story? Or (b) “uninvolved” with the final story?
What made you think that?

3. Your child had an opportunity to perform the written piece in front of classmates at “Author’s Chair.” Later it was published in a traveling book for students to check out.

There was a message on the front of each Traveling Book asking you to have a “Shared Reading Experience” with your child. In your opinion, what do you think a “Shared Reading Experience” might look like?

How would you say your child’s “Shared Reading Experiences” at home turned out?

(Probe Q): Describe a “Shared Reading Experience.”

What type of behavior did your child exhibit? What did you observe?

How appropriate was the request to return the book to school the very next day?

Did that work okay for you? Why or why not?

4. Would your child agree or disagree...? Family-Based Stories written at home were my favorite TBks.” What did you observe? (Can show TBks)

(Probe Qs)

But... this type of traveling book requires a high level of parent Involvement... how did you feel about the time and effort you put in to write a story with your child?

How did a Home Writing Assignment impact your family’s time constraints?

Were there frustrations?

Would you be willing to help your child write another Family-Based Story sometime?

5. Think about your child’s FRIENDS AND CLASSMATES. Could you say they affect his/her learning?

How would you say your child’s friends affect his/her learning?

(... we sometimes see a type of reciprocal energy among students, parents, and peers. Research verifies that whether the parent is present or not, the supportive role parents play in children’s schooling is critical, and that peers also play an important role in students’ learning.)

Do traveling books take into account “the social needs of children?”

Does your child notice the pages written by friends? Yes No Maybe

Do traveling books involve parents adequately? Yes No Maybe

(Probe: SREs, IHW, Input Form , etc.?)

Any advice for the teacher to make the experience better?

6. Talk about the “Input Form.” During the year sometime, you may have been asked to write a NOTE FROM HOME about your child. You may have written more than one note, and some of your notes may have been included in traveling books.

(Can show Examples: i.e., the letter home asking parents to write four notes on a one-page form)

The questions may have been:

- (a) What are the things you wish most for your child in second grade?
- (b) Share a brief story about a family cultural tradition or something that happened in the life of an ancestor:
- (c) Something funny or sweet that your child said or did when s/he was small:
- (d) Why did you choose your child’s name?:

What was your experience with this level of parent involvement (Writing notes for the “Input Form”)?

(Probe Qs)

Talk about this type of traveling book.

How much time did it take to write a Note from Home?

Appendix F

All Parents' Survey Comments

Parents' Comments from Surveys

The original comments from each parent were compiled in this appendix so that struggles, concerns, and frustrations could be analyzed in four ways: (a) in context with the same respondent's other comments, (b) with the comments of other respondents in the same group, (c) with comments of respondents in other groups, and (d) with artifact and other data. The following table shows emergent themes that were used for reducing and analyzing the comments and reporting findings within and across groups for the question regarding struggles versus benefits.

Table F-1

Emergent Themes Regarding Struggles vs. Benefits

Code	Struggles	Code	Benefits
1	Family situations or the family's conflicting priorities	A	Improved student self-concept
2	Parent is uncomfortable with reading and/or writing	B	Opportunity for parent to mentor and valuing literacy at home
3	Time constraints at home	C	Family memories recalled
4	Unmotivated & uncooperative child	D	Increased student interest in writing

Table F-2

Comments for Q. 4-6 (Group 2, 2007-08)

Struggles versus Benefits:			IHW enjoyed most?		
D	Struggles	Benefits	Pets	Adventure	Why this particularly enjoyable?
201	Procrastination	Using creativity		X	Good memories
203	Divorce situation made it difficult for "family" experiences	It was an enjoyable parent/child activity			X She felt good about herself
205			X		
206	Family Adventure Story		X		She was a new pet for our family and Holly liked looking at her pictures.
208				X	
212	Had difficulty staying focused through the whole time	Time with Child. Being able to help.			X
213	Finding time, or just getting my child to sit and do them	Enjoyed the experience together. Enjoyed recalling memories. My child seeing the finished product.	X		She loves animals more than humans ☺
214	Every assignment was a struggle. He would get frustrated and upset.		X		They were funny.
216		Great to spend the time together. Fun to look back at pictures and talk about them.	X		We have lots of fun memories with our pets
217	Easy to give up at first... task seems hard.	Family involvement; learning how to structure a story	X		Really loves his dog.
218	Time	Finished product	X		
220	At first didn't want to do it. After we got started he liked it.	Working with my child and hearing his insights.	X		He thought it was a fun story.
221	Making the time	Reading it together	X		Because she loves pets
223	Not sure how much he understood. Q7. It is hard to say how effective TBks were in terms of these goals: we only got to see one.	He had fun reading the story when we finished.			X He loved hearing the stories about himself.

Table F-3

Comments for Q. 4-6 (Group 3, 2007-08)

Struggles versus Benefits:			IHW enjoyed most?			Why this particularly enjoyable?
G	Struggles	Benefits	Pets	Fam	Baby	
228	--	--		X		Most memorable
230	--	--	--	--	--	--
231	None	It was fun to remember special things together!	X			Because she loves animals!
232	Time	We loved sharing the experience together	X			Memories
233	Getting the instructions to get it done on time	He really got into the projects and thought about them.			X	It was funny.
234	Getting it done!	Time together to talk about events	X			He loved his dog.
236	The hardest part for me was letting her do the writing/typing, instead of doing it all myself to speed things up.	I can tell by looking through the books as she brings them home just how much she has learned through writing these stories.			X	Fun remembering these family times together. Kids love hearing about when they were babies!
238	Time	It was great!	X			She loves animals.
239	--	We talked to each other about the experiences we've had and worked together to decide which one would make the best story.	X			She likes pets.
243	Condensing story for second grade comprehension.	Learning how to write a paper.	X			Because he loves animals.
244	--	--			X	
245	She didn't like having to write on a subject that she didn't choose.	She liked working together.	X			She loves animals, especially her pets.
247	Coming up with ideas... getting it done.	Happy when finished.		X		Remembering a fun vacation

Table F-4

Comments for Q. 4-6 (Group 4, 2006-07)

Struggles versus Benefits:			IHW enjoyed most?			Why was this particularly enjoyable?
#	Struggles	Benefits	Pets	Adv	baby	
308	--	--		X		Easier to remember
309	The struggle is always finding or making time for these kinds of activities.	It was good to see him excited about writing a story.				--
310	--	I felt like it was just a benefit. How is it ever bad to sit down and do something with your child?			X	It was fun to think about my son as a baby.
314	Coming up with a story	--			X	She enjoyed hearing about when she was little.
317	--	--			X	Josh enjoyed sharing his experiences as a "younger" child! ☺
318	No struggles.	It's always nice to have discussions with my child (sometimes it helps to have it assigned ☺).		X		--
320	The struggle was definitely the writing. He hates to write. But also the stress of what story to write because of peer pressure, not wanting to be embarrassed.	The benefit was recalling his past. That made him smile.			X	Recalling the times when he was younger while we giggled together.
321	Getting ideas into writing	--			X	Remembering the past
323	--	He loved the assignment, especially when he was able to put pictures with his stories.		X		He loved talking about his favorite & most interesting vacation, as I said earlier, he loved to find pictures of our trip to include.
325	--	--			X	Reading stories of their friends as little kids and the pictures they drew of themselves was fun to see what they "remembered" and how they saw it.

Table F-5

Comments for Q. 8-10 (Urban Group 1)

Code	Q8.Comment	Th.	Q10.Magic button	Th.
E B 1a01	--	13, 15, 17, 18	Q9 or 10: One last important question: If you could push a computer button to facilitate home-school literacy, what would you want to have happen when the button is pushed?	13
1a02	They should bring more books			
1a08	--		Not sure	
1a09	Translation pending:			
1a11	Keep them reading and practicing more on their communications (In response to Q3, "My child liked [the Memories TBk] very much and wanted a copy of the book.")			
1a13	--		Have children and parents be involved in their literacy, reading of their child.	
1a14	--			
1a15	Translation pending:	4, 6,		
1a17	--		Translation pending:	
1a21	--		Translation pending:	
1a22	--			

Table F-6

Comments for Q. 8-10 (Group 2)

D	Q8.Comment	Theme	Q10.Magic button	Theme
201	It was fun. A little hard sometimes to keep his attention, but a good stretch for him. Loved the final year-end book! Thank you ☺	13, 15, 17, 18	A love for reading and creative writing [would develop]	13
203	--		Same effect as “starfall” – starfall.com (or starfal.com)	
205	--		--	
206	--		--	
208	--		--	
212	--		--	
213	--		To be able to know what level a child should be at a certain age, etc. How to know if they’re there.	8, 18
214	These assignments were really a struggle for my child.	4, 6, 7	Anything that makes it fun and interactive. This is the best motivator.	13, 14
216	--		--	
217	--		Simply would need more time in the day for more reading	3
218	--		--	
220	We could read together when my time allowed. He loved to read before bed.	3, 14	Have interesting stories for the children to read.	9, 19
221	Really liked the [traveling] books	17	--	
223	--		--	

Table F-7

Comments for Q. 8-10 (Group 3)

G	Q8.Comment	Q10..Magic button
228	--	--
230	--	--
231	I thought it was a super project. Definitely do this next year!	To encourage ALL parents to read with their kids starting when they're infants!
232	--	--
233	This was a great activity, keep it going.	Maybe open books or even interactive books.
234	--	--
236	Thanks!	All distractions need to disappear!
238	--	My daughter says Dad I want to go and read this great book; call me in a hour!
239	--	--
243	--	More interesting and captivating chapter books provided for home reading by the school. The take-home books (not TBks) seemed repetitive and somewhat boring for my child.
244	--	--
245	--	--
247	--	--

Table F-8

Comments for Q. 8-10 (Group 4)

L	Q8.Comment	Q10. Magic button
308	--	Interest in Reading; something that makes it exciting!
309	--	--
310	It was always a good experience.	Whatever it takes for them to want to read.
314	--	--
317	It helped us share in his literacy learning—a wonderful way to support your child!	Access to new books
318	We really enjoyed the books. Plenty of time was given to complete before due date [too much; more than needed]	Pen pals: Question and answer back and forth between parent and child. I loved the traveling books. They made the reading and writing much more meaningful.
320	He walks to the bus stop at 8 a.m. and comes home at 4 p.m. By the time I help him do homework and dinner it is time for bed. We don't read as much as we used to together.	I guess a book on the monitor that the pages turn and reads out loud with the words highlighted as it is read.
321	--	--
323	It was a wonderful program.	Books of interest of my child available. Ones he would be more excited to read.
325	The familiar and repeated words in each child's entries helped her to recognize those words and gain confidence. The pictures gave clues to the unfamiliar words.	Sterling home story books (with pictures) more often wherever they get a story book sent home they are eager to read it (Published books with easy-to-follow stories for their grade level).
326	--	A desire to read

Table F-9

Comments for Q. 8-10, 2006-07 (Group 5)

K	Q8.Comment	Q10. Magic button
105	--	To have our schedule calm down enough to have some "quiet reading" time!
106	--	--
107	We loved the traveling books. Very helpful and encouraging to my child to be involved and see other children excited about reading and writing.	A program at school or teacher separate from normal classes for advanced readers. Something to help motivate and encourage and challenge advanced readers.
108	--	--
112	The traveling books were so much fun. I always looked forward to seeing and sharing them. My older children even loved reading them.	Access to age-appropriate books that we could either read online or purchase for our home library
114	At the time my child was less than interested in the process of putting his thoughts together in picture or word form. Overall, I think the books are a great idea. They just didn't work well for my child's learning style.	Have the computer somehow pull the amazing stories from my child's mind that he struggles to communicate to others so that he could then read them and share them w/others.
117	These books were great! My child wanted to look at and read them over and over. It was a great way for me to assess my child with classmates.	I love anything that helps parents and children discuss personal character.
118	--	Quiet in my home—so attention could be on my reader!
119	Traveling books were very enjoyable for us.	Turn computer off, and TV.
120	--	The ability to PRINT reading level appropriate books s/he could hold & read
121	--	--
122	They took the place of nightly reading together.	No complaining when I say, "Quiet reading Time"
123	I enjoyed the books. Can they also be used in 1-3rd grade curriculum?	My child would ask me to have reading time.
124	--	--
127	--	--
129	I thought it was a good program and my daughter enjoyed creating and sharing the books.	--
134	--	--

Table F-10

Comments for Q. 8-10 2007-08 (Group 6)

Code	Q8. Comment	Q10. Magic button
0141	--	--
0142	Not asking too much of a child at this age but giving us a "job" to sit down & do together. I love these books!	I think what the school does is wonderful. Every grade at its own level is up to par in my opinion.
0146	I thought this was a fun, simple, and quick way to share fun things w/our child.	?
0148	He really likes seeing what his friends did, too	Send home story books from the classroom more often, like the bag of 3 alphabet books—he was excited to read and sound out all the vegetables & fruits and was very motivated.
0149	Cute books, Lots of fun	More feedback immediately on how they're doing w/reading
0151	--	I would be able to spend more time helping in class. Helping in class allows me to see what and how concepts are being taught and reinforce them at home.
0152	--	Something so that when she reads by herself she will know if she says a word wrong so she can resound it out.
0153	She loved the time we would sit down and do a one on one with her. She loved to read it to all of us.	That she would enjoy and love to read.
0154	--	--
0155	We really enjoyed reading each one—thanks for doing them.	--
0157	--	For my child to have complete understanding of all of the ridiculous rules that accompany phonics and structural analysis of words in the English language.
0159	She loves to read the travel books to me. This is a great idea.	Reading to my child would be really important to me.
0160	I think they are great—it's nice to compare my child's work w/others	--
0161	The books are very cute & fun to read together	More feedback on where they should be & what they should be doing to get there.
0162	I enjoyed the traveling books. I liked seeing how kids draw things and their personalities. I was amazed that my daughter easily recognized her classmates' names.	To get my daughter to sound out words, not just guess at what they are. Also, my daughter's having trouble with comprehending what she's reading sometimes—because it takes her so long to string the words together that when she's done reading a page, she wants me to re-read it to her so she can listen & understand all at once. So to help her comprehension level would be great!
0163	I felt that the traveling books were fun and helped the child include the parent in her school activities of reading and writing.	For learning to be fun and captivating for my child to continue to grow and learn.

(table continues)

Code	Q8. Comment	Q10. Magic button
0164	He really like the books, and he like that he got to bring them home. (No difference to my child's literacy learning)	Phonics learning
0168	Good job. I feel like the goals above are things we work on at home. (marked "2" for a; "3" for b – g.)	A love for reading.
0171	--	--
0172	I thought they were great. It was fun to sit down and have my child read it to me and then talk about the pictures.	I can't answer this question. They get too much time on computers. I think sitting down together and reading is not only helping them learn to read and learn literacy, but also bonding together as parent and child.
0173	--	--
0178	She was always very excited to bring home a traveling book and share it with us. It was neat to see her so excited about her own work as well as her classmate's work.	Print off books she could read and pass off, increasing in difficulty, but appropriate for her age.
0179	--	--
0180	--	I would want it to be an "I love reading" button that makes her love reading as much as being read to! She loves when we read to her, but whines when it's her turn to read to us! Can you make her love it?
0181	My daughter did not get into traveling books. She preferred the other books the kids made as well as the little readers she brought home at the end of the year. (marked "No difference to my child's literacy learning.")	I would like to have all of the really great reading books at her disposal so she could read, listen to, or enjoy both whenever she wanted to. I would also gain more time in the day so we could read more. It is a great way to spend time with my kids.
0182	I would like to know what the latest research is on what is the most effective & efficient way to increase literacy for families like mine—large & busy family.	Have books or reading lists sent home each day that match my child's reading level and list questions or short activities to go along with the reading.
0183	--	I would like to have more communication with the teacher about my child's abilities & areas for improvement

Appendix G

Five Scripted Lesson Plans

“Interview with a Classmate”

The following five lesson plans were written, tried, and revised year after year by participant second grade teachers to conduct an interactive in-class writing activity lasting 5 weeks (see Figure 4-21, p 104 for a typed TBk page from this activity). Some students also published a sewn book using the text they had authored.

A second 5-week activity followed similar lesson plans to pre-write, draft, revise, edit, and publish both a TBk and a sewn book of students’ stories about themselves (see p 162 for Lori’s story called “Learning to Talk”).

CONTENTS

Introduction

Lesson One: Planning (Pre-writing Activities)

Lesson Two: Making a Rough Draft

Lesson Three: Revising

Lesson Four: Edit and Rewrite

Lesson Five: Publish and Share (AUTHOR’S CHAIR)

FIVE TBk LESSON PLANS for “Interview with a Classmate”

Introduction:

Set aside one hour of class time each week: 15 minutes literature sharing, 15 minutes scripted lesson, and 30 minutes guided and independent practice

You as the teacher: Your personality, attitude, teaching style and enthusiasm for writing should pervade the course. Students need to feel the teacher’s respect for their abilities as authors regardless of the level of support that each child requires.

Motivation: The first six or eight students to complete their steps will be first to choose their blank books, and first to perform “Author’s Chair.” Their performance will motivate the others, while they will go on to work on their next project or to serve as “Student Editors.”

Student access to the teacher is essential during guided practice each week. However, a small element of time lag may encourage independent problem solving. The teacher may want to use a “take-a-number” strategy to maintain a quiet atmosphere for writing. Techniques such as Author’s Chair, Partner-Proofreading and Group Sharing will be maximized, while teacher-checking and teacher-editing will be minimized.

Author’s Chair is a celebration of the child’s finished work, a culmination of step six of the Writing Process. Child can be seated prominently and her classmates seated in a circle on the floor around her. Certain elements seem essential to Author’s Chair:

Successful performance of the Author

Audience appreciation for the author’s work, possibly applause if sincere

Teacher’s question, i.e., “What did you like about (child’s name)’s story?”
Allow the Author to call on 3 or 4 students to comment about a specific story element.

Add the Author’s story or book to the Class Library or Traveling Book

Management of TBks: The purpose for this instruction is to accomplish effective mentoring of the writing process while performing tasks within given time constraints. Rubrics will guide home-writing projects, which will be published as Traveling Books with minimum teacher workload. Daily checkout and check-in of Traveling Books will be handled by a Student Librarian with a clipboard whose daily job it will be to account for the books.

You as the teacher will manage and mentor authorship throughout the two-month course, and also launch the Home-Writing segment of the course. Strict adherence to weekly and

daily authoring routines you set during THE FIRST TWO MONTHS should assure that a minimum workload would be required for the remainder of the year.

Lesson One: Planning (Prewrite Activities)

Materials: A biography for Literature-Sharing such as “Benjamin Franklin” or “Ruby Bridges,” a folder for each student to keep his or her writing safe (“Author Folder”).

Literature-Sharing: Read aloud a short biography. Talk about how the author designed the book (cover design, title page, opening sentence).

Ask, “How do you think the author found out what to write about in this biography?”
(Read, ask questions)

Say, “We are going to write a biography about a classmate. We are going to ask questions. We will begin by planning some questions for our biography.”

On the chalkboard help students to generate a list of 20 or more questions that they may want to ask a classmate. (“Yes-no” questions are not allowed.) Write the questions on the board in “short form.”

Say, “We will leave space after each question to write an answer later.”

Color of eyes -	Pets -
Hair -	Vacation -
A best-loved story -	Movie -
When you grow up -	Holiday -
Food -	Hero -
Favorite place -	Chores -
Favorite sea animal -	Day of the week -
Favorite bird -	After school -

Pass out writing paper and have students write their name at the top-left. They are to begin writing their own questions as you continue to add some of their ideas to the list on the board. Remind students to leave plenty of empty space after each question.

Have students save their question papers in their Author Folders.

Ask, “Who would like to tell something you have learned today about being an author?”
(Call on 2 or 3 students to tell something they have learned.)

Lesson Two: Making a Rough Draft

Materials: A class list of paired interviewer-interviewees

A quick way to pair students is to place two identical class lists side by side. Slide the “Interviewer” list up so that each student is aligned with a student in the “Interviewee” list. Keep a record of assigned “interviewer-interviewee” pairs.

A short biography for Literature-Sharing, students’ question-answer paper from Lesson One, writing paper, pencil, and a red crayon for each child.

Literature-Sharing: Share a biography with the students. Ask, “How do you think the author found out what to write?” (Study, Ask questions) Ask for a volunteer to help you model a short interview. Make notes on the board.

Give each child the name of a classmate to interview. Have students open their Author Folder, take their question-answer paper out, and write the classmate’s name in red crayon at the top-right. Allow 10-15 minutes for half of the students to interview their partners as they write answers on their paper. Then have students switch roles and change partners. Each student should conclude the session with 10 to 15 answered questions.

Seat students in front of a chalkboard. Use a question-answer list to demonstrate sentence-writing: **Show the question: “Favorite bird; Answer: Owl.”** “How can we make this into a sentence?” (Mary’s favorite bird is an owl.)

Add to the list and ask, “What is wrong with these sentences?” (They all begin with the same word; “Mary”)

Mary’s favorite bird is an owl.

Mary’s favorite food is pizza.

Mary’s favorite place is her bedroom.

Mary’s favorite subject is Math.

Mary’s favorite pet is a cat.

Ask, “How can we re-write these sentences so they don’t all begin the same way?” Help students change the order of words on the board:

Owls are Mary’s favorite kind of bird.

Pizza is her favorite food.

Mary likes it in her bedroom.

Math is Mary’s favorite subject in school.

Her favorite animal is a cat.

(Did we get rid of the repetitious words at the beginning of every sentence?)

Give students new writing paper and have them write their question-answers in sentence form. (Author's name at top-left, Interviewee's name at top-right in red)

Walk around and assist as needed. Have students save their completed sentences in their Author Folders.

Ask, "**Who would like to tell something you have learned today about being an author?**" (Call on 2 or 3 students to tell something they have learned.)

Lesson Three: Revising

Materials: *A short biography for Literature-Sharing, a handful of colored pattern blocks, "Sentences for Lesson Three" (found on the next page), a board or a large piece of chart paper and tape or glue. For each child: scissors, glue, pencil, a red pencil or crayon, and a sheet of construction paper.*

Literature Sharing: Read aloud from a short biography. Discuss the author's choice of an opening sentence. Notice how sentences are arranged in the story for grouping of ideas. Notice the main ideas in sections of the story.

Place a handful of colored pattern blocks where all students can see them. Ask a volunteer to quickly arrange the pattern blocks into a design. Assist if necessary. Make a "Discard Pile" for the pattern blocks that are not used.

"(Child's name) has *revised* the pattern blocks! Just as (child's name) has arranged the pattern blocks, authors try to arrange their sentences. They put ideas together that 'Go together' and discard the rest."

"Here are some sentences (show "Sentences for Lesson Three," found on the next page). Let's revise them:"

1. Cut the sentences apart
2. Group the sentences on the board or on chart paper that "go together." Suggested categories: "Description of Jake," "Animals," "Seasons," "Favorite things," and "Family."
3. Discard sentences that may not go well with the story. Discarded sentences may be kept in the Author Folder.

4. Read the revised order and glue sentences in place

5. Expand. “Do you see any sentences that you want to know more about? How can you find out more?” (Ask questions such as “Who? What? When? Where? or Why? and “How did it Sound? Smell? Taste? Feel? or Look?)

Use a marker to insert two or three expanding ideas, such as revising “Jake has a dog” to “Jake has a white dog named Fluffy,”

“Open your Author Folder and revise your sentences.”

Have the students sort their sentences that “go together” by cutting them apart, organizing them into categories, and then gluing them in order on a piece of construction paper. Demonstrate. Walk around to assist. Show students how to expand ideas and insert added details.

Have students save their revised work in their Author Folders.

Ask, “Who would like to tell something you have learned today about being an author?” (Call on 2 or 3 students to tell something they have learned.)

Sample Sentences for Lesson Three: Cut apart the sentences below and sort them into categories. Discuss possible categories for revising (re-arranging the child’s sentences), such as: Describing Jake, Favorites, Family, Seasons, School

Jake’s favorite sport is football.

His hero is his dad.

He has blue eyes.

Jake has a dog.

His favorite holiday is Halloween.

Jake’s chore is to feed his bunny.

His color of hair is black.

His favorite shape is a rectangle.

Jake’s brothers are Chatlen and Noah.

In the fall he loves to jump in the leaves.

He loves the city of Seattle so much.

When Jake grows up his favorite job would be to drive a truck.

His favorite thing to do at night is read.

Jake’s favorite month is May.

Spaghetti is Jakes favorite dinner.

Lesson Four: Edit and Rewrite

Materials: *A short biography for Literature-Sharing, a student dictionary, and the teacher's computer with the planned format for publishing; i.e., two columns per page, bold font titles, text centered. Sentences can be entered as each student dictates his or her work (format for typing and sample work is included on CD).*

Literature-Sharing: Read aloud a short biography. Talk about how the author designed the book; cover, title page, contents, opening sentence, and whether or not the story has a satisfying ending.

"Today we will *edit* our stories." Write a sentence on the board that has obvious mistakes: **ann liks jump rop** "Does this sentence look right to you?"

Ask students to guide you in editing this sentence. Show students how to look up a word in a student dictionary to check spellings and meanings.

1. Use standard editing marks to edit spelling, capital letters, and punctuation.
2. Decide to re-write the sentence correctly-"as-is," OR to revise the sentence:

Change the order of the words (sentence structure)

Expand the idea, add details

Edit several sentences on the board directly from students' manuscripts.

Finally, say, "You will have a few minutes to edit your own work. Before we begin, who would like to tell us how to edit our work? (Review the 2 steps above.)

"I will time you for six minutes. What are you going to do for six minutes? (Review the two steps again). Voices are off. You will have six minutes to edit a few of your sentences. Work on one sentence at a time and try to make it better. If you finish all your sentences, wait quietly for others to finish. Are there any questions about what you are going to do?" "Begin." (Walk around the room. If necessary, whisper questions to keep individuals working.)

Share two or three edited sentences that you have seen students working on, or ask, "Who would like to share a sentence that you edited?"

"What is the last step in the Writing Process?" (Re-write and Publish).

Students who think they have finished editing may sign up for the last step. Call students one at a time to the teacher's computer to dictate their story as you type it. Have students save their edited work in their Author Folder.

Lesson Five: Publish and Share

“AUTHOR’S CHAIR”

Materials: *The first completed stories in page protectors, if desired*

Authors may illustrate their work or a digital photo of the interviewee may be inserted at the top of each story. Specific identifying information about students should not be published.

Print two copies AND a “class batch” of each finished page:

One copy for the Traveling Book, One copy for a back-up of the Traveling Book, and

A Class Batch for each child’s End-of-Year Book

As leading students perform their work at “Author’s Chair,” others will be motivated to re-new their efforts. The first six or seven students to publish may be “Student Editors” to provide support for slower students.

Discuss the routine for “Author’s Chair:”

1. Come to the floor and be ready to listen
2. Watch and listen for the part of the author’s work you liked best
3. Applaud when the author is finished
4. Critique; raise hand and wait to be called on by the author to:

Praise a specific part of the work

Ask a question you are wondering about, or offer an idea to expand the work

Students should NOT merely say, “I liked EVERYTHING.”

Students should NOT repeat something already mentioned

5. Final applause/celebration

Call students to the floor. Have an author take “Author’s Chair” to share his or her work (in page protector). Applaud when the author is finished.

Ask, “What did you like about (student’s name)’s work? (Share a few critiques.) Applaud again.

Bind the Traveling Book. Check to be sure that no student’s story is left out. The student librarian may use a clipboard to check out the new Traveling Book each day. The Traveling Book should be accounted for every morning.

Appendix H

Comparison of a Simple Rubric (preferred by parents)

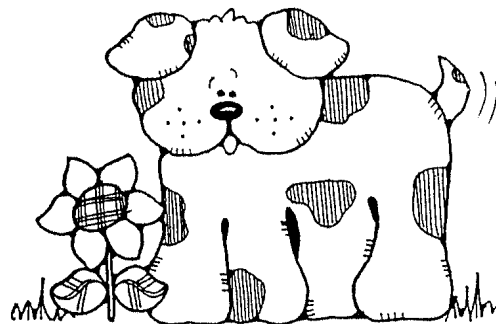
vs. a Concept-Rich Rubric for IHW

Simple Rubric for IHW (preferred)

“Pets in Our Lives ”

A HOME WRITING PROJECT:

Our class is making a book of true pet stories. You will have 10 days to write and illustrate your story about an animal that you or your parents have known. You can use the back of this page, or use exactly ONE SIDE of an 8½” x 11” page that you provide. You may work together with a family partner to plan and write or type your story. Illustrations can be careful drawings or a photograph.



Be neat and precise in your work. Good luck!

Your one-page story will be due Wednesday, _____ (date)

	STANDARD	POINTS (1-25)
1	Organization: Good opening sentence; satisfying ending	
2	Details: Tell who, what, where, when...	
3	Illustrations: Pictures reflect details of the story	
4	Neatness: The story is inviting and easy to read	

Total Points _____

Student Name _____

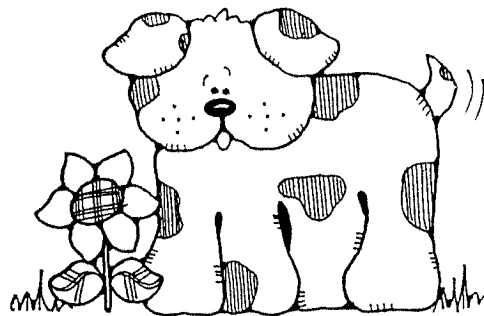
(Graphics by D.J. Inkers)

A Concept-Rich Rubric for IHW (problematic for parents)

Interactive Home Writing

Dear Family Partner,

My class is making a Traveling Book called Pets in Our Lives. We will have ten days to write and illustrate a one-page story. Animals often do silly or wonderful things. We will work together to write a story about an animal that we have known. We may use the attached form, or use exactly one 8½" x 11" page that we provide—one side only. We may write or type my story.



The prompts on the back of this page will help us plan my story. I may decorate or illustrate my story. Photos are acceptable.

I will read my story aloud for my classmates at “Author’s Chair.” Our pages will be bound into a Traveling Book to be shared with my friends and their families. I hope you enjoy this activity with me. This assignment is due _____.

Sincerely, _____ (Student’s Signature)

Please return with the assignment:

Dear Parent,

Please give me your reactions to your child’s work on this activity.

Write YES or NO for each statement.

____ My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it.

____ My child and I enjoyed this activity.

____ This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in language arts.

Any other comments: _____

Parent’s Signature _____

PLAN AND DRAFT: Pets in Our Lives

Narrative writing tells a story. It includes a definite beginning, middle, and end. It uses details.

Think of something that happened with an animal that you or your parents have known.

Describe the animal you choose to write about (size, color, texture, name, behavior)

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
When?	
Where?	
Who was there?	
What happened first?	
Next?	
Last?	
How did we feel?	

List how your story will go. Ask for help to revise and edit.

A great Beginning Sentence! _____

Middle of the story _____

A Satisfying Ending _____

Finally, on one side only of an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet, publish your finished story!

Decorate or add pictures. Practice reading your story to someone.

Appendix I

Bracketing Interview

My Involvement with TBk projects
A bracketing interview with Dorothy Little

Part A: Questions by Dr. Martha T. Dever, November 25, 2009 (telephone interview)

Part B: Questions by Dr. J. Nicholls Eastmond, March 18, 2009 (e-mail interview)

Part A

Marti. The reason I wanted you to record this is because it's kind of hard to bracket it if you don't go back and re-visit it, and think about it and so forth, and so—the purpose of it is to confront the bias that you might have about a particular topic, which we all have when we do research. That bias brings us to that research.

The thing we want to talk about is how you got involved in it. Maybe you could talk about how that evolved; how first, as a mother, and then how did you start it as a teacher, and what did that mean to you over time? Start there and I'll ask you questions as we go along.

D. Okay, when that first TBk came home [with my son], I thought, “Oh, I can look at how my child is doing compared with how everyone else is doing.” That was always important to me. How my child actually fit in [with his peers]. How do I gauge—like, when a child has a high mark on a report card, I always wanted to know, [what is the context for this mark?] “Compared to what? How was everyone else doing under the same conditions? So then, I could gauge better. So, TBks were an effective assessment tool for me as a mother.

And that was before we [as teachers] tweaked them around and adapted them to 2nd grade curriculum. [That was back] when it was all entirely written at school. But the topics drew from the children's PRIOR experience, Home situations, like—something about my Dad, or—you know, things that were family knowledge, but on a more simple level.

M. So, that got you interested from a personal level. And then you went to teaching and just sort of continued the practice?

D. Well, I'd seen the ones (TBks) that came home. I walked into a kindergarten teacher's classroom one day, just down the hall from where my classroom was, and picked up a TBk from off her music stand and looked at it a little more critically. And I started asking her how she did her program—how she taught the children and brought them to that point so that they could all contribute. Because as we know, kindergarten children don't usually come to school knowing how to write.

And she shared a thing or two with me, and she was excited about it, and I assumed that there had been some teacher training that taught her how to do that. I asked her what professors she'd had but she actually had designed it from things that she had learned and she couldn't really give me a source. She was a BYU graduate.

I was impressed with a volunteer mother that came into the classroom and taught. She had been a writing specialist and 2nd grade teacher, had done teacher training, and had gone into other classrooms as a writing specialist. She was also a BYU graduate so I assumed they must have picked something up from there that was similar in their approach. In both cases they drew on the child's prior experience.

As a parent I felt that the things that I could contribute [to my child's schooling environment] with my child, [it] being "home or family" knowledge, gave me credibility. And that was important to me. And—I was not always a perfect parent. I didn't always do the amount of reading every day with my children—there were things that I wanted them to learn and wanted to do with them, but we weren't perfect. Far from it. And I kept thinking, now, as a teacher, "What would have helped *me as a parent*?" and I realized that there were some parents in the same boat that I had been in. I think, giving parents just a little "ownership" was a key there.

M. So really, your favorable attitude about it came about from your experience as a parent. Is that accurate?

D. Yes.

M. So then you became very supportive of having it [TBks] in your own classroom?

D. Yes, and part of that also, we got to the point of doing something that we hadn't seen done before; I wanted parents to write collaboratively with their children. My thinking was, "Ohmygosh, we're doing 6-traits writing and absolutely sinking [as teachers]. Checking papers, helping kids learn how to edit, doing a lot of editing with them and for them, more hours of work than we could get done, I thought, I'm going to hand a little bit of this [to the parents]. I had heard a quote—this was a key thing—by professional development trainer that, "If one teacher reads everything that all of her students write, they, the students, are not writing enough."

So I thought, "Okay, I'll let some parents help me out here. It was maybe a selfish thing to start with, "Okay, I'll assign some home writing and let the parents do some of this editing; they can be responsible for however it turns out, and then we'll enjoy it here in class and make a TBk out of it," and oh, I thought this was a great idea, but I had pangs of guilt, truly. At least, in the first ones we did, until I realized how beloved these TBks actually were. We had 100% [parent participation]. We had to go after a little handful and encourage the parents, and draw a few of the stories through verbal means, but very few. But we did have 100% of the parents [contributing].

M. And why do you think that was, that you had to work with some parents to do it? Were there some who weren't good readers themselves? Or non-readers, or non-native English speakers?

D. Definitely, and the non-English speakers came [almost] entirely from the inner city classroom. But our findings there were amazing. I had the resources to do home visits but

was dealing with health concerns during the year that I spent an hour each week in that class. But, had I been able to—I did have a translator, a young woman who was learning the English language and had worked in my classroom quite a bit before I retired—who volunteered to help me with home visits. This would have been the perfect thing for this study. I think we could have obtained 100%, even with the turnover of students coming and going, had I been able to go with her. But the thing about it, some of the parents who did *not* participate—their invitation was in two languages you know—there were some who were hesitant until after one or two TBks had circulated [to students' homes]. After they had seen one or two, *then* they started filling in the empty spaces we left for them if they wanted to contribute.

M. Okay! Great. Thank you. It's good to talk to you.

D. It's good to talk to you too and hope you have a wonderful holiday. Thank you!

Part B (e-mail interview; questions by Dr. J. Nicholls Eastmond)

Nick: How did you get started teaching?

D: That probably goes back to my early teaching experiences in my church, first teaching Young Women, and later teaching Sunday School and Primary. And I would have to say that watching the amazing teachers that our children had made a difference, too. Our first four children were in school when I started taking a class or two at Weber State College. My emphasis eventually turned from English to Early Childhood Development. By the end of 1979 I finally received my Bachelor of Science degree and, mid-year, began teaching first grade at the elementary school in Morgan where my younger children attended. I continued teaching there for the next 29 years, teaching first, fourth, and second grades. It was a joy to walk to school each day and to have my own children with me or accessible before and after school. They often did their homework or helped me during my prep time. Those times were only equaled during the years that my grandchildren were students in my class. I truly enjoyed my job.

N: What got you into teaching reading?

D: I've always felt like a reading teacher with my own children. Before that I read sometimes with my younger siblings. I've always loved good literature and reading, but didn't spend as much time reading as I should have. In college I wrote a few controlled-vocabulary stories for emergent readers thinking I might publish them some day. The more I learned about teaching reading, the more I realized I still needed to learn! There was so much to it! Not just phonics and word recognition. Teaching reading is an art and I wanted to learn it.

N: How did you get involved with traveling books?

D: I still remember the day I walked into a friend's kindergarten class and picked up one of her Traveling Books, and she told me what it was. I knew the concept had possibilities for accomplishing some of my own teaching goals. In fact it resonated with my belief that students learn best if they can use their own prior experiences, or their own words, as a vehicle for new learning. That possibility was what I saw in traveling books (TBks). I could see that TBks had potential to increase home-school interactivity, increase literacy mileage for students, and provide a record of students' writing over a year's time.

N: How has the idea of TBks evolved over time?

D: It started simply with the kindergarten model. I soon learned that a traveling book by itself was only the tip of the iceberg. A whole routine of integrated curriculum accompanied it. Each traveling book was a culminating product to represent a month of literacy learning. Several teachers noticed and were impressed with what the kindergarten teacher was doing. I wanted to design TBks for my own second grade students to culminate each month of our literacy curriculum, which came mostly from our school's literacy program. Also, my teaching was greatly enhanced by the mentoring of other teachers.

From year to year we re-used some of the TBk materials and gradually increased our files to make the project more systematic. Mostly it was just two second grade teachers, but others were taking note and trying some aspects of TBks in their classrooms.

One year I tried sending home a writing assignment that I felt sure would benefit learners if the parents would support it. It consisted of a simple rubric asking the parent and child to work together to write a one-page family-based story. Our first topic was "Dogs in Our Lives," and the assignment was to write about "a dog that you or your parents have known." It didn't occur to me that a student in our rural community or his or her parents might not know of any dogs. It was several years later before I encountered one that didn't.

All I would have to do was check off each story as it was handed in and then proceed with Author's Chair! I almost felt guilty! No other teacher I knew of had tried assigning home writing, at least not until they saw the impressive TBks that resulted. A few years later I found a website that described a prototype for Interactive Homework originating from Johns Hopkins University called TIPS (Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork). I gained confidence from the website and from my first trials with what I called Interactive Home Writing (IHW). After that I increased the IHW assignments to three per year. The biggest challenge was in obtaining stories from late or non-responders, but simple follow-up procedures resulted in 100% parent participation for several years. Meanwhile, I continued to compile TBks from class-written stories that had worked well in the past. Some years I published eight to ten TBks.

N: How did your experience raising your own kids, as they came up through the

grades, affect your professional practice with TBks?

D: For one thing, when my children were young, I was always looking for activities to do with them to keep them busy and going along the right track. Yet at each parent teacher conference it seemed that we would come up short. I mean, we loved reading, but we were very busy and days or sometimes weeks could slip by without our doing any reading together. Since becoming a teacher I've thought about that. I've wondered what could have helped me as a young parent to be more consistent and motivated with home study, and what could help the young parents of my students. I think I truly needed more contact with what my children were doing at school, at least more often than parent teacher conferences provided. I think more frequent contact with school and what my kids were doing there would have motivated my family on our home study goals.

N: Who were the people that influenced you most with the concept of TBks?

D: Without a doubt, it was my mother. She influenced me most. Because when I first saw a traveling book that had been designed by a teacher, it looked like something my mom might have designed. Mostly I recognized it as a mechanism to "teach new concepts from the child's own repertoire of experiences," as my mother always tried to do with my siblings and me. I've had some wonderful teachers and exemplars. A recent one was Marti Dever, a professor in the Department of Education. Marti helped me design and conduct a pilot test for Traveling Books in 2005 to learn about observable reciprocal energy that could be generated between students and parents in peer environments where traveling books were facilitated. Two findings resulted from the study. First, 75% of the parents preferred traveling books that required parent involvement in two phases rather than one; the authoring phase and the reading phase, as opposed to only the reading phase. Second, we found that the intensity of reciprocity between students and parents in peer environments depended upon the presence of specific criteria, such as the amount of sacrifice, preparation, or effort involved in meeting a challenge, and the amount of sharing that occurred with individuals from both worlds: family and peers. One parent observed that "just getting through struggles together contributed to greater bonding with [my daughter]."

N: Where does your belief come from that parents have responsibility for their child learning to read?

D: I've lived in Utah and Southern Idaho all my life, and that idea is part of our home-grown, self-reliant culture.

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1959 Logan High School, Logan, Utah

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Teaching at Morgan Elementary School, Morgan District, for 29 years (1978-2007)

First grade teacher (1978-1986), Fourth grade teacher (1986-1987)

Second-grade teacher, including first/second grade mix (1987-2007)

A partial list of professional assignments

Elementary chair for grant-writing and development of district native garden:
Raised \$7,252.36 in-kind contributions, directed youth groups to develop & promote grounds (1991-2003)

Committee member for Morgan District Learning Model Development (1992-1996)
Community Communications team for the Morgan District Learning Model: conducted five meetings in each voting precinct (1991-1992)
Secretary for Morgan District Outcomes-Driven Development Model (ODDM) Core Team (1988-1991)
Teacher's Assistance Team (TAT) (1984-1986)

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Conference Presentations and Proceedings:

Little, D. (2007) "K-3 student-authored traveling books: encircling families." Paper presented at the 42nd Annual Utah Council of the International Reading Association Conference (UCIRA): Salt Lake City, Utah

Little, D. (2007). K-3 Student-Authored Traveling Books. Paper presented at the Annual Reading Conference for Teachers, Administrators and Specialists by the Idaho Council of the International Reading Association (ICIRA), Idaho Council of Teachers of English (ICTE) and the Boise State Writing Project (BSWP): Idaho Falls, Idaho

Little, D. (2005). "Six traits writing: the publishing/sharing step." Teachers' back-to-school professional development in the Morgan School District: Morgan, Utah

Peer Reviewed Journals: pending.

A partial list published and in use by peer educators

Little, D. (2006) "Second Grade Traveling Books;" CD and Teachers' Guide, bound for School use at Mountain Green Elementary School (MGES) and Morgan Elementary School (MES) Copy protected.

Little, D. (2005) "Parent-Teacher Literacy Partnerships: Teachers' Guide." Bound for use by second grade teachers at MES and now at MGES. Copy protected.

Branch, S., Little, D., Moon, J., & Rajigah, L. (May, 2004). "Northern Utah Correctional Career Curriculum." Utah State University Instructional Technology Graduate Department. Presented to, and used by Northern Utah Correctional Facilities. Copy Protected.

Gomez, J., Little, D., Rajigah, L., Winder, D. (December, 2004) "Utah State University Dept of Instructional Technology Needs Assessment: Students' Perspectives." Published in "Report of the Needs Assessment – Phase 1 – for the USU Department of Instructional Technology (2004). Logan, Utah by Shane DeMars, Mark D. Mason, Jose Gomez, Corbin Bell, Preston P. Parker, Shelley Henson, J.N. Eastmond. Supervised by Dr. J.N. Eastmond [INST 7300].

Little, D. (2004) "Native People of Utah—Our Navajo Neighbors." CD containing 4 narrative simulations and a "read-along" instructional Ppt presentation to help elementary students experience aspects of traditional Navajo culture. Used by MES and MGES grade-level teachers. Copy protected.

Little, D. (2002) "Rocks in Motion—the rock cycle." CD containing a Ppt. presentation for elementary students featuring a read-along rhythmic play on language. Also contains a template for publishing student-authored class newsletters. Used by MES and MGES grade-level teachers. Copy protected.

Little, D. (1985). "My World of Microbes." Flipchart story. Copyright pending.

Little, D. (1977). "Teacher brings historic characters to life." A portrayal of Alan Griffin's teaching strategies in his eighth grade history class. The Standard Examiner, Local/Metro section: Ogden, Utah.

Condensed version of book: Original: Glasser, W. (1988) The Quality School: Managing Students without Coercion. ISBN 0-06-095286-5. [Quality School REV/E 3/E]. Copyright by William Glasser; Inc. HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY. Condensed by D. Little (1989) for weekly distribution to the faculties of the Morgan School District by the District Committee for Outcomes-Driven Development Model (ODDM) and Outcome-Based Education (OBE).

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Educational Research Association (AERA)
 Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT)
 International Reading Association (IRA)

HONORS & AWARDS

Awarded with two foundation scholarships to pursue M.Ed. at WSC/USU
 Golden Apple Teacher's Award: Ogden Standard Examiner